
Gaffigan's Travels: A Comedian's Life on the Road
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DECEMBER 2015/JANUARY 2016
Best of the World
20 MUST-SEE PLACES FOR 2016
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Salto Corumbá in Goiás, Brazil, by "Your Shot" Member Victor Lima
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Stanton Mountain above Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park
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Your Shot

Cover Winner
Corumbá waterfall, says photographer Victor Lima, is a 30-minute hike from a trailhead about 75 miles from Brasília, in central Brazil. It's a fun place to camp—and his own idea of the "Best of the World." Lima's shot was our top pick of 34,000-plus images submitted to *Traveler*'s cover assignment at *natgeoyourshot.com*.

JESSICA SAMPLE (LETTERPRESS AT DAPPER INK)

ON THE COVER: CORUMBÁ WATERFALL IN GOIÁS, BRAZIL, BY VICTOR LIMA **BACK PAGE:** I HEART FEZ, MOROCCO, PAGE 96


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Notebook

A JOURNAL FOR THE SMART TRAVELER

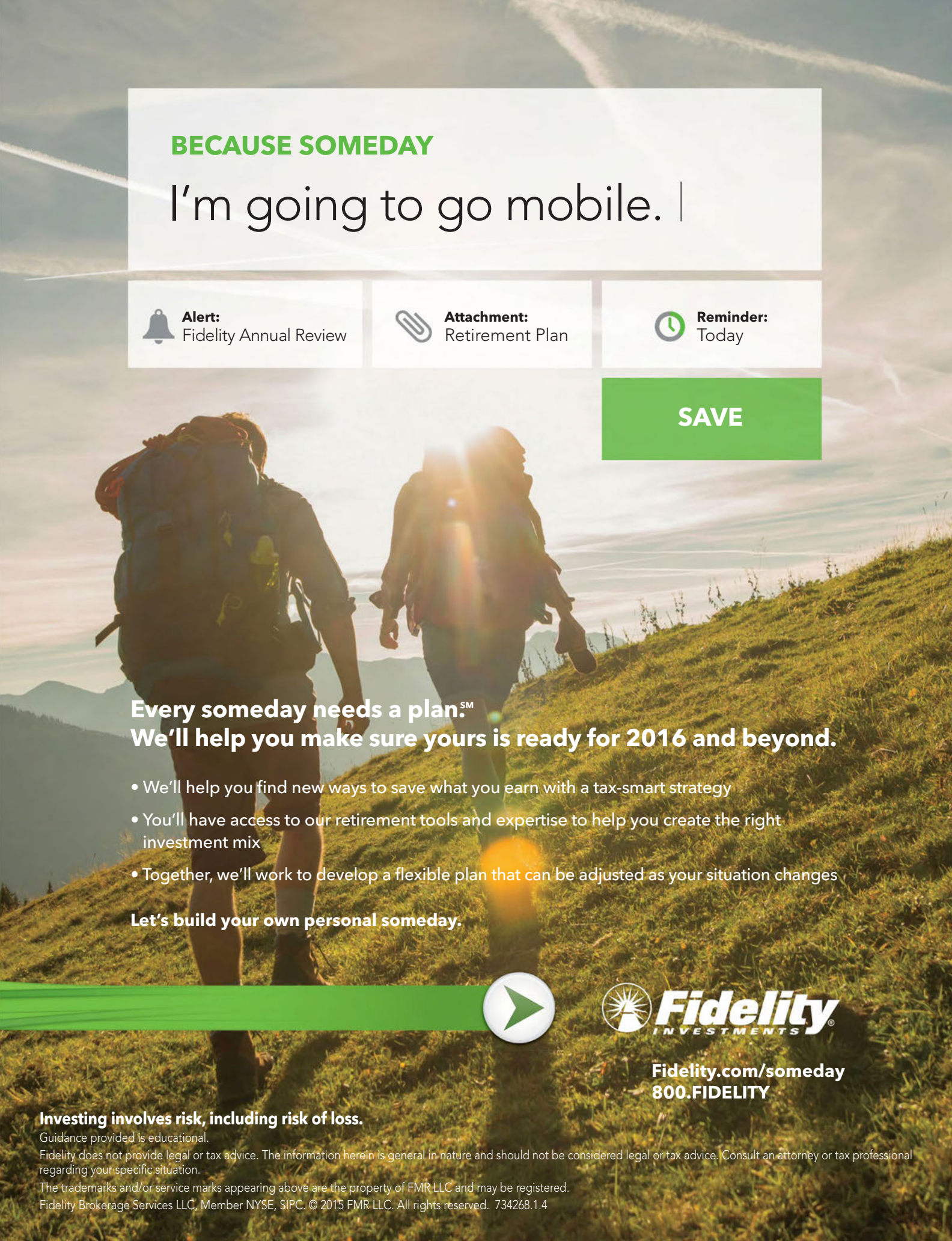
Up Close and Personal

Whether they're on the African plains or the streets of Paris, these travel Periscopers are coming at you live.

SEE TECH



GERRY VAN DER WALT/WILD EYE



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A couple taps to the tune at Twin Sisters Dance Hall in Blanco, Texas. In Schulenburg, Sengelmann Hall (bottom) dates to 1894.

CLASSIC

THE TEXAS SHUFFLE

Preserving the Lone Star State's dance halls two steps at a time



Sheathed in tin siding and steeped in Lone Star history, ramshackle Twin Sisters Dance Hall in Blanco, Texas, is a folksy fold in the space-time continuum, a portal to an era when dance halls were common and honky-tonk was nightly. More than a thousand dance halls once dotted Texas, most of them built by 19th-century German and Czech immigrants, but time has taken its toll. Urbanization, assimilation, and neglect have silenced all but 400 of these hubs, where jigs, jives, and waltzes once ruled. Twin Sisters, which opened in 1870, is among the oldest. "A part of Texas dies every time a hall is lost," says Deb Fleming, president of Texas Dance Hall Preservation, an organization dedicated to saving the spaces that stir Saturday night fevers. What can visitors expect in these two-step temples where polka still pulsates? Cheer, beer, double shuffles, and a musical mix that melds Irish and African-American fiddle ditties, Willie Nelson warbles, Mexican-inflected *guitarrón* songs, and Texas-style country and western. "The history of American music is ingrained in the very fiber of these buildings," says Fleming. If these age-old floors, dusted with cornmeal to enhance dance, could speak, they might just yodel. —GEORGE W. STONE

WHERE TO BOOT SCOOT Some dance barns swing nightly, others fox-trot infrequently; check online to plan your boogie nights at these haunts: Luckenbach Dance Hall in Fredericksburg, Gruene Hall in New Braunfels, Quihi Gun Club and Dance Hall in Hondo, Sengelmann Hall in Schulenburg, and Twin Sisters Dance Hall in Blanco.

J. GRIFFIS SMITH/TXDOT (BOOTS), JULIE SOEFER (BUILDING)



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I DON'T KNOW IF IT'S WEATHER, BUT THE NORTHERN U.S. HAS EXCEPTIONAL AUDIENCES.

EXPLORER

Dad Jokes Allowed

Jim Gaffigan talks touring, family, and pastrami.

Comedian Jim Gaffigan, who shares a two-bedroom apartment in New York City with his wife and five young kids, has a family life that's a natural fit for a sitcom.

The semibiographical *Jim Gaffigan Show* stars the comic as he navigates time with his growing brood and the stand-up circuit. In reality, Gaffigan maintains a pretty good balance between the two; his family joined him on his month-long bus tour across the United States this past summer.

HAS TRAVEL INFLUENCED ANY OF YOUR BITS? Absolutely. I think comedians actually have to struggle to not have travel be the predominant thing in their stand-up because they deal with it so much on a daily basis.

DO YOU HAVE ANY TIPS FOR TRAVELING WITH KIDS? We make our two oldest ones journal about each city we go to. Some of that's just so their brains don't completely fry, and some of it's [in the hope] that they'll get a kick out of it later on.

HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH LOCALS WHILE TRAVELING? I'll ask a local, "If [you] were gone for six years and could come back and have one meal, what would it be?"

Sometimes if you ask, "Where should I go?" they'll tell you the tourist spot or a super high-end restaurant. [When I go my route], I usually find the unique burger or fried chicken place.

IF YOU WERE RETURNING TO NEW YORK AFTER SIX YEARS, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FIRST MEAL? Katz's. In New York City everything's changing, but [Katz's has] retained a special kind of New York characteristic. —HANNAH SHEINBERG

FOR MORE OF OUR INTERVIEW WITH JIM GAFFIGAN, VISIT INTELLIGENTTRAVEL.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM.

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Dunes dominate in the Rub al Khali desert near Abu Dhabi.

ON LOCATION

TRACKING THE FORCE

Explore the latest Star Wars *filming sites.*

They may not be in a galaxy far, far away, but exotic locales such as the soaring sand dunes of Abu Dhabi and Iceland's bubbling calderas help give *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*—which hits theaters in December—an otherworldly spirit similar to the original trilogy's. Die-hard fans ritually tour *Star Wars* film sites, yet in the most recent prequel films, CGI replaced most location shooting. But for *Force Awakens* director J. J. Abrams, real sets were the priority.

Rub al Khali, the desert landscape outside of Abu Dhabi known for its nearly thousand-foot-high sand dunes, represents Jakku, a newly introduced planet filled with starship wreckage. There's a rumor of a future *Star Wars* museum at nearby Saadiyat Island, where a Louvre and the world's largest Guggenheim are being built.

At Iceland's Krafla volcano, another filming site, an eruption in 1724 formed a crater that now holds an aquamarine lake with a hiking trail along the rim. Across the country, the Eyjafjallajökull glacier doubles as an ice-covered planet similar to *The Empire Strikes Back*'s Hoth.

For greener pastures, the crew headed to Ireland's Skellig Michael, a towering rock island and World Heritage site that features the remains of a medieval monastery, and England's Greenham Common, a former Royal Air Force base in Berkshire that's now known for restored heathlands and walking paths. —MARLENE GOLDMAN

GEORGE STEINMETZ


a tripadvisor traveler review
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Kimberly M, Virginia
Cueva Ventana, Arecibo
I'd heard about this place and told myself that I'd go during my next trip to PR.
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Pull up a seat beside the 25-meter lap pool at the Island House, in Nassau, Bahamas.

CHECKING IN

INDULGING IN THE ISLANDS

Homey or historic, these new Caribbean lodgings pamper.

THE ISLAND HOUSE

Nassau, Bahamas On an island of soft sand beaches and big resorts, this newly built, 30-room inn feels like a cool, contemporary vacation home—if your vacation home included its own 48-seat cinema. Guests and locals catch a movie just steps from the airy lobby, which is brightened by Bahamian art. There's also a spa, a lap pool, and spicy *wagyu* beef salad for dinner—which happens all the time at your vacation home, too, right? From $550.

CONDADO VANDERBILT HOTEL

San Juan, Puerto Rico Jay Gatsby would have approved of this revitalized grande dame, a Roaring Twenties haunt of royalty and movie stars amid the shopping-and-nightlife buzz of the Condado neighborhood. A 2014 renovation added two all-suite towers, a spa, and an infinity pool that overlooks the ocean. But in the original 1919 building, which was designed by the same firm behind New York City's Grand Central Terminal, old-time glamour reigns once more with Murano glass chandeliers and sweeping staircases fit for the likes of Daisy Buchanan. From $350.

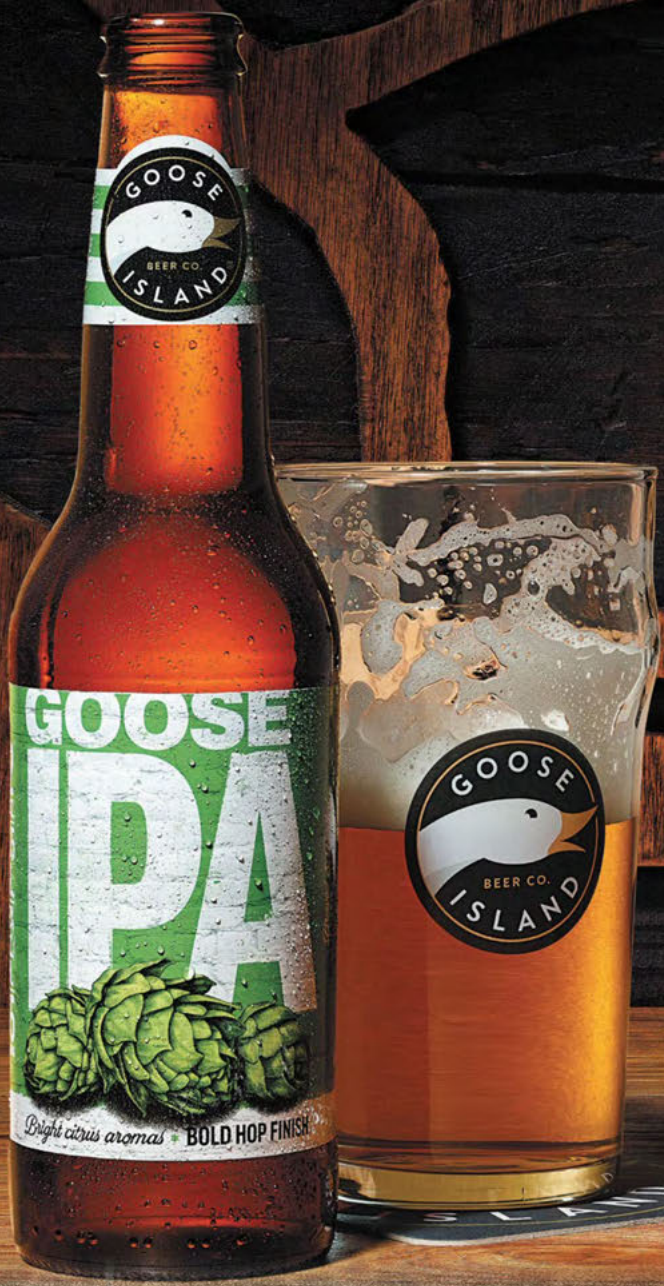
CASAS DEL XVI

Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic Situated in three restored houses built for European settlers, this ten-room boutique hotel adds to the Zona Colonial district's historic atmosphere with its checkerboard-tiled floors, antique maps, and shell-inlaid wooden furniture. Loaner iPhones break the nostalgic reverie, but keep them turned off to fully enjoy breakfast served by house butlers under a mango tree in a serene courtyard where elegant señoritas once fanned themselves. From $339. —CHRISTOPHER HALL

THE ISLAND HOUSE

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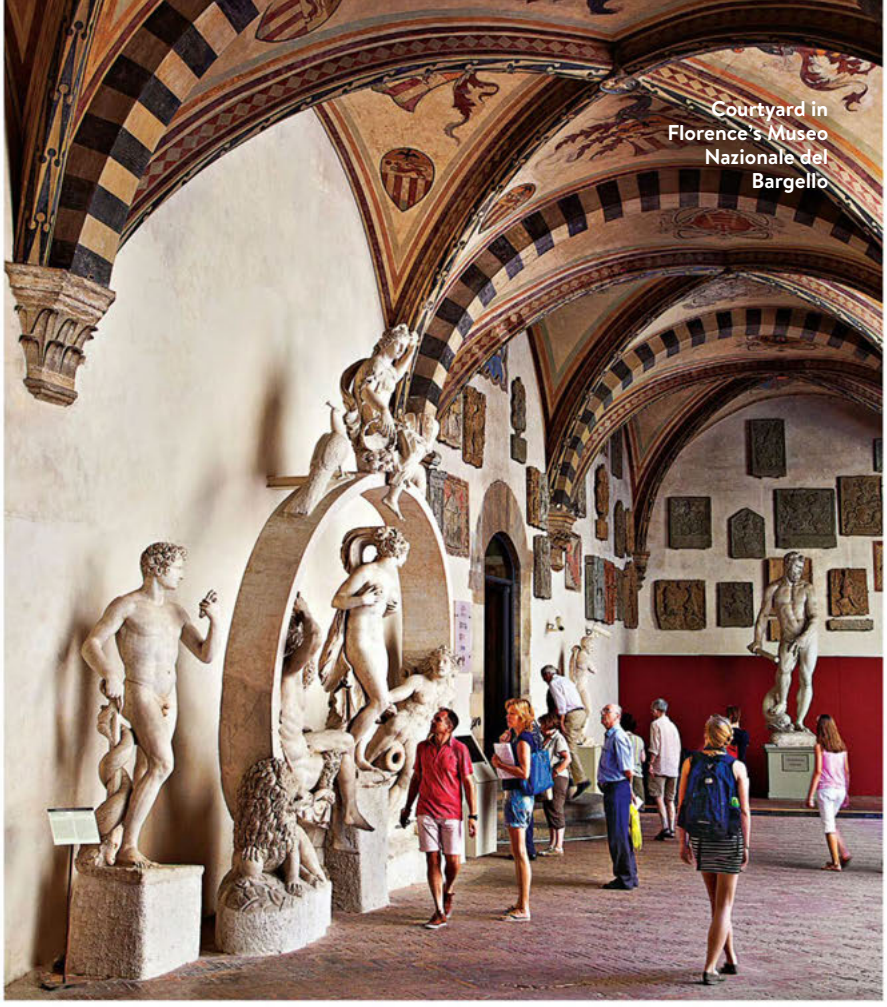
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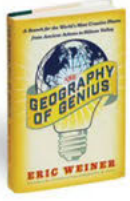


Courtyard in Florence's Museo Nazionale del Bargello

BOOKSHELF

A Grand Reading Tour

New titles that travel from antiquities to the Amazon



THE GEOGRAPHY OF GENIUS *By Eric Weiner* Following up on his best-selling *The Geography of Bliss,* Weiner travels to Athens, Hangzhou, Florence (above), Edinburgh, Calcutta, Vienna, and Silicon Valley to investigate why quantum leaps of intellect seem to occur in certain places at certain times.

HUNTERS IN THE DARK *By Lawrence Osborne* Osborne recalls Graham Greene and Somerset Maugham with this densely atmospheric novel of foreigners and locals navigating fortune and fate among the lush rice fields of Cambodia.

THE WAY AROUND: FINDING MY MOTHER AND MYSELF AMONG THE YANOMAMI *By David Good* The son of an American anthropologist and of a woman from the Yanomami tribe, Good ventures from his New Jersey home into the heart of the Amazon to reconnect with his mother.

LIFE AND DEATH IN THE ANDES *By Kim MacQuarrie* The human history that has shaped South America is dramatically re-created in this rich account of iconic Andes characters, from Pablo Escobar and Hiram Bingham to Che Guevara and Butch Cassidy. —DON GEORGE

FOR MORE BOOK REVIEWS, VISIT INTELLIGENTTRAVEL.NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM.

TECH

PERISCOPE IT OUT

The Periscope app is like Google Street View come to life, with locals to show you around. The video stream is live, so hosts can answer questions you type in real time. Here are our three favorite travel 'Scopers to follow.

Don't be misled by her Kiwi accent: Tour guide and New Zealand transplant *@ClaireWad* has lived in Paris for 20 years. She cruises neighborhoods on foot and bicycle, exploring courtyards and cafés, letting her followers choose her adventure by asking questions like "Shall I go in this church?" or "Shall I hop on this riverboat?"

@PenguinSix, an American expat living in Hong Kong, films his hike on Victoria Peak almost every morning. Sometimes he takes public transit (subways, ferries) as he talks about life in the city. He's even filmed from Hong Kong's tallest building as a typhoon approached.

If you love wild animals, follow *@GerryVanDerWalt,* who leads photo safaris in southern Africa. He's always trying new techniques, like filming through binoculars so you can see a group of lions up close. Now and then his connection fails, but watching a family of elephants cross the road in real time is worth the wait. —MARILYN TERRELL

CHRISTINA ANZENBERGER-FINK & TONI ANZENBERGER/ANZENBERGER/REDUX (MUSEUM), REBECCA HALE AND MARK THIESSEN/NGS (BOOK), GERRY VAN DER WALT/WILD EYE (LIONS)



Young lions in South Africa

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YOUR SHOT

Double Vision

Calm water offers a canvas for Morocco's architecture.

While waiting for three hours inside Marrakesh's Ben Youssef Madrassa to capture this shot, Japanese photographer Takashi Nakagawa had plenty of time to reflect on the beauty of the Moroccan landmark. "When I was younger, my dream was to be an architect," says Nakagawa. "I believe that architectural design has the strong power to create an atmosphere that touches people's hearts."

His image certainly struck a chord with our photo and design departments—this photograph was one of the finalists in our Your Shot "Best of the World" cover assignment (see Contents page).

"I love the symmetrical patterns and shapes of the tile work, both on the walls and the floor of the shallow pool, along with the carved details that surround the arches. The entire composition and color palette are incredibly soothing," says senior photo editor Carol Enquist. "I was also immediately drawn to the hooded subject walking by, whose body language gives the picture a contemplative feel, as well as an air of mystery."

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Fairy-tale-like homes in Skógar, Iceland; group of Yule Lad impersonators (bottom)

LOCAL COLOR

TINY TIDINGS

Celebrate Santa's little helpers in Iceland.



Elves are small—only 36 inches high at most. And though they have big ears and wear old-fashioned clothing, they do not wear pointy hats.

Such facts can be learned on an "elf walk" in Hafnarfjörður, a harbor town just outside Reykjavík reputed to be the elves' capital. Yes, elves. Fifty-four percent of Icelanders either believe in them or say it's possible they exist. Roads have been diverted around boulders where the elves supposedly reside. A former member of parliament even swears his life was saved in a car accident by a family of elves.

A wintertime elf-themed stroll through Hafnarfjörður spotlights the 13 Yule Lads, pranksters with names like Hurðaskellir (Door Slammer) and Kertasnikír (Candle Stealer). Local children often leave out shoes for the Yule Lads to fill with treats. The holidays are an especially fortuitous time of year to see elves; on Christmas and New Year's Eve, they're known to be on the move, searching for new homes.

Walks often pass Hamarinn, the cliff where the elfin king and queen are said to hold court, and Hellisgerði Park, a solidified lava flow the elves find especially homey. In December visitors can embrace the Yuletide spirit even further at the popular Christmas market downtown.

Want to learn more? Enroll in Reykjavík's Elf School, where in a three-to-four-hour course, complete with textbooks, tea, and cookies, you'll earn an elf diploma. —RICH WARREN

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FOOD & DRINK

Coffee Buzz

Five ways to drink a cup of joe around the world

ROME, ITALY Espresso gained popularity after manufacturer La Pavoni perfected the machine in 1905. Forcing scalding water through fine grounds produces a concentrated brew with a layer of *crema* on the surface. At Sant'Eustachio Il Caffè near the Pantheon, Romans have sipped espresso since 1938.

HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM The French introduced coffee to Vietnam in 1857, so this creamy drink is a vestige of its colonial past. Each is brewed with a single-serving metal filter (called a *phin)* resting on a cup that cradles spoonfuls of sweetened condensed milk. The mixture is stirred and poured over ice. Try it on the patio at Trung Nguyen coffee, one of the country's largest chains, overlooking busy Pham Ngu Lao Street.

ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA In coffee's country of origin, visitors can experience a traditional coffee ceremony only in private homes. It involves roasting the fresh beans over coals and brewing the grounds three times while burning incense. But modern Addis Ababa residents drink black coffee or even a macchiato at family-owned Tomoca in the bustling Piazza neighborhood.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN Sweden is one of the largest coffee consumers worldwide, possibly due to the tradition of *fika.* The daily coffee break paired with a snack can take place at home, at work, or at a café like Vete-Katten in Stockholm. Its cinnamon buns or award-winning *semlor* (buns filled with almond paste and whipped cream) pair perfectly with a warm mug of drip brew.

MACAU, CHINA Black tea, a remnant of English rule in Hong Kong, is filtered through a cloth and combined with sweetened condensed milk and coffee to make *yuanyang.* Across the Pearl River Delta in Macau, World Record Coffee has served it for 45 years with a traditional accompaniment—charcoal-toasted bread drizzled with more of the syrupy milk. —MEREDITH BETHUNE



CLASSIC COFFEE CEREMONIES IN ETHIOPIA INVOLVE BREWING THE GROUNDS THREE TIMES.

A frothy Ethiopian-style macchiato in Addis Ababa

TIM E WHITE/GETTY IMAGES

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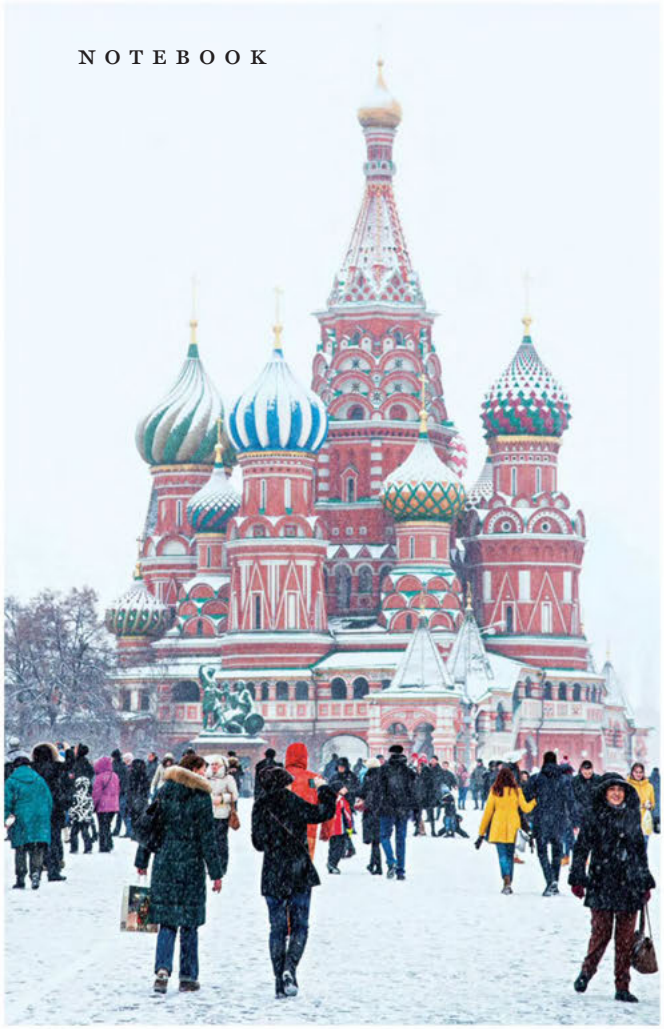
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MY CITY

MOSCOW NOW

BY JEFFREY TAYLER

Seeing the Kremlin at night always enthralls me, even after my 22 years in Moscow. The vista of brick towers and crenellated ramparts, so magnificent as to appear unreal, calls to mind an illuminated print from an old book of fairy tales.

My sighting of Russia's most famous (or infamous) fortress comes as my cab trundles over the Bolshoy Kamenny Bridge, through air shimmering with a fierce frost. Gusts of wind stir snowdrifts along the banks of the Moskva River below us. No less the seat of power now, during the era of Vladimir Putin, than it was in Ivan the Terrible's day (or Stalin's), the Kremlin evokes, for me, a mix of dread and majesty—the emotions I experienced as a child of the Cold War when I both feared Russia (I lived in Washington, D.C., aka ground zero) and marveled at it. My fascination led to graduate studies in Russian and East European history, to my first visit in 1985, and to a move here for good in the summer of 1993. In 1999 I married a Russian. Moscow is the city I call home.

The Kremlin, a walled citadel with five palaces and five churches, looms on my right as we shoot past vast Red Square, presided over by St. Basil's Cathedral, with its candy cane cupolas. We drive by the State Duma (parliament), faceless and modern (and totally subservient to President Putin). Then comes Lubyanka Square and another bunker of a building, today housing the KGB's successor, the FSB. Here one August night in 1991, crowds of Russians cheered

Art stands out in Moscow, from supersize *matryoshka* dolls (right) at Afimall shopping center to St. Basil's Cathedral (top left). Delicatessen (bottom left) is a tucked-away restaurant popular with young Muscovites.







A temple to gourmet foods since 1901 (and renovated in 2004), the neo-baroque Eliseevsky emporium specializes in caviar and other delicacies.

as cranes dismantled the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the blood-soaked founder of the Soviet secret police.

Those were promising days, when real democratic change in Russia seemed possible. These days, Western sanctions threaten the highest living standard Russians have ever known. For all but dollar- and euro-bearing travelers (feeling blessed by the ruble's devaluation), now should be a cheerless time in Moscow. But it's not.

My cab leaves me at a restaurant near Lubyanka, Ekspeditsiya ("expedition"). It's crowded, loud with folk songs sung by a group of musicians and customers clinking glasses and toasting. I have come for lively conversation and traditional Russian cuisine; since the fall of the Soviet Union more than two decades ago, Russian cooking has become something of a rarity in Moscow, at least outside people's homes. (Most top restaurants are international.)

I'm joined by Irina, a Muscovite friend who staunchly defends Putin. The evening promises to be interesting. Over drinks and cedar nuts, Irina enlightens me.

"Russians," she says, "have always been conquering wild country. We are always ready to light out for the wilderness, even in subzero frosts. We need difficulties to thrive. That is just who we are."

Settling wildernesses also meant eating unpalatable things, including some "delicacies" on our menus—marinated moose with cabbage, grilled reindeer tongue with cowberry sauce. I choose a safe favorite, *pelmeni* (dumplings), specifically Siberian pelmeni stuffed with deer meat and smothered in delicious *smetana,* or sour cream. We wash the meal down with a half liter of vodka, which we drink straight, the Russian way.

The next time we meet, it is at Club Mayak, a restaurant in the middle of "Old Moscow," a web of lanes winding between low stucco houses dating from a century or two ago. Once the dining area of the Mayakovsky Theater, next door, Club Mayak now serves as a low-key gathering place for some of Moscow's best known actors, writers, and journalists. With a red-walled interior, careworn furniture, and sepia-tinted lighting, there are no pretensions here.

Over some wine and a plate of European cheeses, served despite an official ban on such goods, I ask Irina what the future holds.

"We went through World War II and we won," she replies. "I am not worried."

I'm feeling a bit less sanguine. But I do know this: Whatever happens in Russia, its fate will be decided, one way or another, here in Moscow—a fact that continues to fuel this city's indomitable spirit.

JEFFREY TAYLER *is a contributing editor at the* Atlantic *magazine and has written several books on Russia.*

FRANK HEUER/LAIF/REDUX (GROCERS); PREVIOUS PAGES: NADIA ISAKOVA/AWL IMAGES (CATHEDRAL), CEDRIC ANGELES/INTERSECTION PHOTOS (WOMEN), JEREMY NICHOLL PHOTOGRAPHY (GIANT DOLLS)



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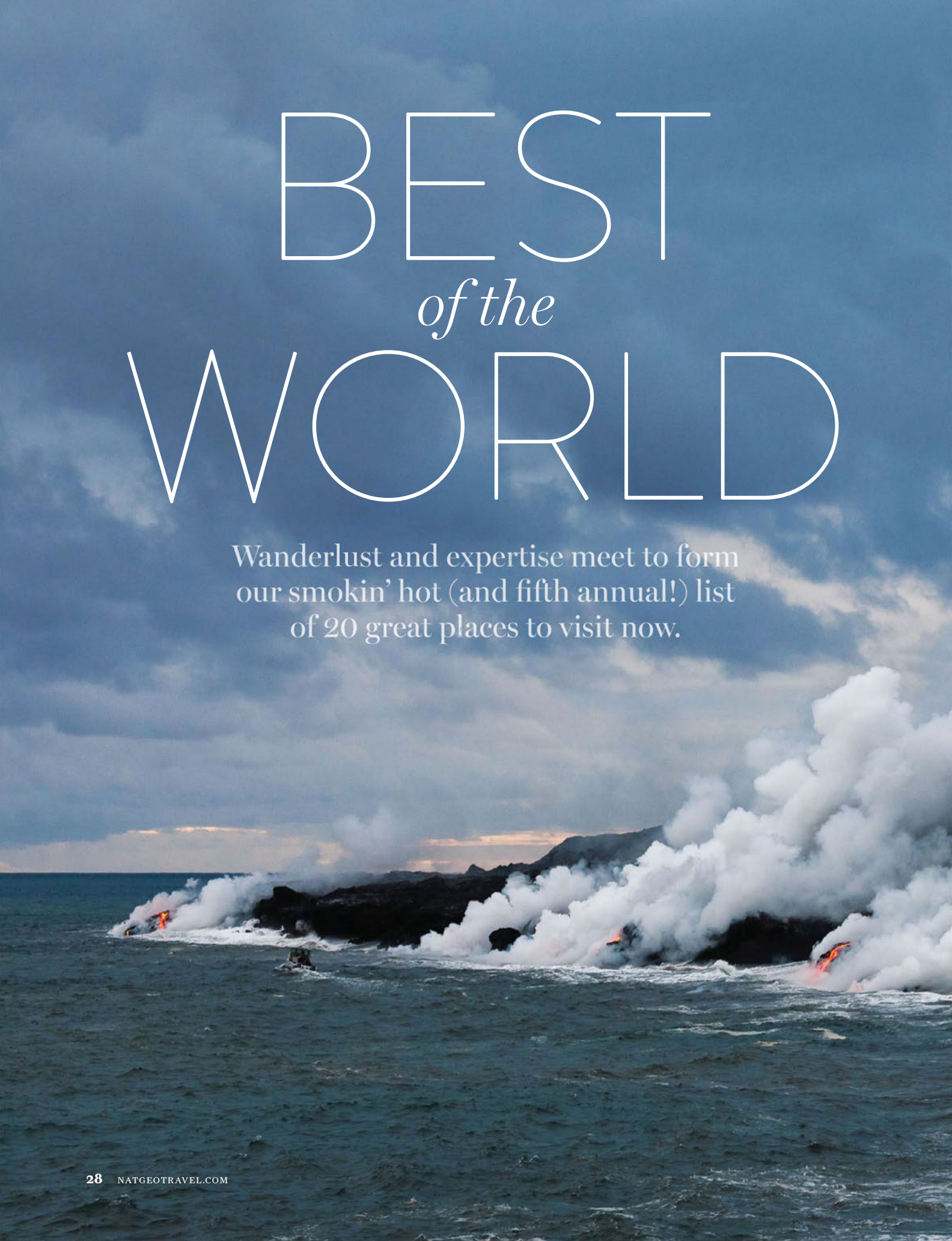
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BEST *of the* WORLD

Wanderlust and expertise meet to form our smokin' hot (and fifth annual!) list of 20 great places to visit now.





Lava from Kilauea, one of Earth's most active volcanoes, flows into the Pacific at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

HAWAII VOLCANOES NATIONAL PARK

100 years of earth, wind, and—most of all—fire

VAST FLOWS OF solidified lava sprawl across Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, a blackened, primordial calling card from the park's most illustrious resident, the Hawaiian fire goddess Pele. Said to dwell in Kilauea, one of two volcanoes here that are among the world's most active, Pele has been a busy lady. Since 1986, hundreds of acres of new land have been created by molten rock welling up from deep inside Earth and spilling, hissing and steaming, into the Pacific Ocean.

"Lots of visitors come for the lava," says Clarence "Aku" Hauanio, the third of four generations of his family to have worked at the 520-square-mile Big Island park, which celebrates its centennial in 2016. "But there is so much more—the coast, the rain forest, the thousands of petroglyphs made by ancient Hawaiians, all the different plants and animals found nowhere else but Hawaii. You could work here for 29 years, like me, and still see something new every day." –CHRISTOPHER HALL



Lava field at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park





BEST OF THE WORLD 2016

1 Hawaii Volcanoes National Park **2** Uruguay **3** New York City **4** Masurian Lakes, Poland **5** San Diego/Tijuana **6** Greenland **7** Glasgow, Scotland **8** Tangier and Smith Islands, Chesapeake Bay **9** South Georgia Island **10** Capability Brown's Gardens, Britain **11** Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil **12** Winnipeg, Canada **13** Seychelles **14** Philippines **15** Danube River **16** Okavango Delta, Botswana **17** Bermuda **18** Eastern Bhutan **19** Côte d'Or, Burgundy, France **20** Hokkaido, Japan

OPENING PAGES: GRANT ORDELHEIDE/TANDEM STOCK; TOSHI SASAKI/GETTY IMAGES (LAVA); NG MAPS



Café Brasilero, founded in 1877 in Montevideo's Old Town, is a perfect spot for a *cortado*, espresso with milk.

YADID LEVY/ANZENBERGER/REDUX

URUGUAY

Under-the-radar South America

LOW-PROFILE Uruguay has received attention recently thanks in part to the unconventional ways of José Mujica, its president from 2010 to 2015, who lived in a ramshackle house on a dirt road and donated much of his salary to charity. The attention is deserved: South America's second smallest country, dwarfed by surrounding giants Brazil and Argentina, is an oasis of stability.

A fashion-fixated international crowd flocks to the beaches, luxury lodgings, and arts scene in Punta del Este. To the east, wetlands stretch up the Atlantic coast to Brazil, notably the Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve, home to more than a hundred bird species. Then there's 17th-century Colonia del Sacramento, a World Heritage site for the fusion of Spanish and Portuguese architecture in its old town.

Montevideo, where about half of the nation's 3.3 million people live, is "the calmest capital city in Latin America, whether you're strolling along the Plata River or ducking into a boutique museum," says novelist and filmmaker Carolina De Robertis. Highlights here include the colonial Old Town and the costume-filled Museo del Carnaval.

Uruguay may never emerge from the shadows of its neighbors, but for a land where banknotes feature artists and writers instead of generals and admirals, that may be a good thing.

—WAYNE BERNHARDSON



NEW YORK CITY

Start spreading the news about this famous skyline.

IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW America's most visited city, you may want to take a second look. Over the past year, the tallest office building (One World Trade Center) and tallest residential building (432 Park Avenue) in the Western Hemisphere have topped out, at 1,776 feet and 1,396 feet respectively, part of a crop of bold new skyscrapers that are transforming the celebrated New York skyline. Public spaces, too, have been revitalized, from the waterfronts of lower Manhattan and Brooklyn to the High Line and the new Whitney Museum on the west side. The view from One World Trade Center's 102nd floor observatory? Stunning. The view from a helicopter? Utterly surprising, revealing hidden nooks, rooftop gardens, and everyday activity made novel with a different perspective. The gray-brown metropolis becomes quilted with white in winter; in spring, pockets of color bloom. You almost can hear Frank Sinatra belting out, "I'll make a brand-new start of it, in old New York." —GEORGE STEINMETZ



One World Trade Center towers over lower Manhattan in this image from photographer George Steinmetz's new book, *New York Air.*

MASURIAN LAKE DISTRICT, POLAND

Classic European countryside

IF YOU JOIN some merry campers at a bonfire in Poland's Masurian woods, sooner or later you'll hear them break into a popular sailing tune that celebrates the Masurian Lakes region.

"The song lists the many treasures we cherish here," says Maciej Milosz, who co-owns a boat rental company, "including lots of fish to catch, wild mushrooms to eat, and unimaginably vast forests."

Stretching across northeastern Poland 125 miles north of the capital, Warsaw, the Masurian Lake District claims some 2,000 lakes, many connected by rivers and canals. Always popular with Polish vacationers, the region remains a quintessential example of the simple pleasures of traditional country life.

In summer months Masuria's lakes ripple with sails, while the red-roofed resort towns of Giżycko and Mikołajki teem with boaters and bathers. If you prefer solitude, head over to Nidzkie or Łuknajno Lakes, nature reserves free of motorboats, where you easily will find a quiet waterside spot. Don't count on being alone, however. The lakes' navy blue waters attract diving cormorants, mute swans, and clamoring storks, while deer, moose, wolves, wild boars, and the elusive lynx roam the Pisz Forest, a remnant of a pristine wilderness that once covered much of northern Poland. It all adds up to even more to sing about. —ADAM ROBINSKI



Youngsters assemble a raft near the Krutynia River in Poland's scenic Masurian Lake District.

SAN DIEGO/TIJUANA

Coolest border crossing

CONSIDER THIS TALE of two cities, separated by the busiest land-border crossing in the Western Hemisphere. On one side is San Diego, with 70 miles of sandy shores, a pioneering zoo, Tony-winning theater scene, and Southern California climate. On the other side, some 17 miles south, is Tijuana, a Mexican city defined for decades by drug traffickers.

However, just as San Diego has upped its cosmopolitan bona fides, Tijuana, with almost as big a population, is turning over a new leaf. Drugs still flow north, but cartel violence has subsided and tourism is on the rise. San Diego has noticed: The Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego exhibits such south-of-the-border painters as Alvaro Blancarte and sells out two field trips a year to Tijuana's art studios and galleries. The *New York Times* has feted Tijuanero chef Javier Plascencia's "Baja-Med" menu at Misión 19. In July, Plascencia opened Bracero Cocina de Raiz in San Diego's Little Italy.

"Crossing the border completely changes your mind-set," says Plascencia, who traverses this new frontier several times weekly to oversee his kitchens. "It's such a privilege that we can live in these two cultures at once."

—DAVID SWANSON



Octopus skewers at Javier Plascencia's lauded restaurant Misión 19 in Tijuana

GERHARD WESTRICH/LAIF/REDUX (CHILDREN); SANDY HUFFAKER/NYT/REDUX (FOOD); PREVIOUS PAGES: GEORGE STEINMETZ (NEW YORK CITY)



The aurora borealis arcs over the remote East Greenland village of Tiniteqilaaq, accessible by foot, helicopter, boat, or dogsled.



GREENLAND

Northern exposure

THE INUIT OF Greenland call it *sila,* the immense natural world experienced with all five senses. It is the whispering wind that shapes the surface of the snow, the crisp inhale of Arctic air, the coarse touch of rocky shores.

"We know we can't control nature; we can only be close to it," says Greenlander Jane Petersen.

Kalaallit Nunaat, as Greenland is called by indigenous Inuit, is the great frontier of the north, a vast, stone-faced giant capped by an ice sheet more than twice the size of Texas. Aquamarine rivers squiggle across its white void, feeding a thousand thundering waterfalls that flow into enormous fjords. The *qajaq* (kayak) allows close sightings of spouting whales—and, if you're lucky enough to be on a small ship that can access remote habitats, Greenland may be the best place in the world to see polar bears in the wild.

Circumpolar athletes will gather in the capital, Nuuk, for the 2016 Arctic Winter Games, the largest international event ever hosted in the country. Along with skiing and ice hockey, participants will compete in ancient games such as the finger pull and kneel jump.

"We understand that we are only borrowing this land," says Petersen. "That is why we love sharing it with others." –ANDREW EVANS



GLASGOW, SCOTLAND

Amped up with the arts

IF EDINBURGH is the blue-blooded aunt at Scotland's tea party, then Glasgow, just 45 miles to the west, is the T-shirt-clad cousin kicking over the kettle on the way out.

A wealthy shipbuilding and trade hub on the River Clyde since the 15th century, Scotland's largest city fell into dereliction, earning a rough-and-tumble reputation that stuck to soot-covered buildings well into the 1980s. Now scrubbed up and gleaming, Glasgow flexes cultural muscle, artfully burnishing its industrial cityscape.

Scotland's self-proclaimed Year of Innovation, Architecture, and Design kicks off in January, with Glaswegians proudly puffing their chests. The Turner Prize, Britain's most esteemed contemporary art exhibition and award, is in Scotland for the first time, culminating on January 17 at Tramway, Glasgow's former streetcar terminus.

But it is music that really pumps Glasgow's cultural heart. From the bagpiper busking top-20 tunes along Buchanan Street to the crooner wooing crowds at storied clubs like King Tut's Wah Wah Hut, Glasgow's sound track is unrivaled.

"To describe a typical Glasgow musician is quite difficult to do," says Stirling Gorman, who performs with his brother, Cha, in their band, King of Birds. "It's really a Glasgow swagger that ties us together like twine."

—KIMBERLEY LOVATO

Glasgow's Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum dangles artist Sophie Cave's "Floating Heads." Top left: Musicians entertain at a pub.



JIM RICHARDSON/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (MUSICIANS), MATTEO CARASSALE/SIME/ESTOCK (HEADS), JIM LO SCALZO/EPA/CORBIS (WATERMAN); PREVIOUS PAGES: KATHLEEN WASSELLE CROFT (AURORA)

TANGIER AND SMITH ISLANDS, CHESAPEAKE BAY

Historic—and endangered—communities of a bygone America

IN THE MIDDLE of the lower Chesapeake Bay, almost facing each other across the Maryland-Virginia state line, sit two centuries-old, remote, and threatened communities.

Both Smith Island, Maryland, and Tangier Island, Virginia, were first mapped by Captain John Smith in 1608. Welsh and English settlers mainly took to Smith, while natives from England's West Country favored Tangier. Residents of both islands retain unique "relic dialects," passed down from their ancestors and preserved by isolation. Watermen here have lived off the bay's oysters, crabs, and fish for almost 200 years. Their family names resound throughout the islands: Evans and Tyler on Smith; Parks, Pruitt, and Crockett on Tangier.

Life here is slower and quieter than on the mainland. Even with regular ferries, these are secluded places: few stores, almost no cars, and no bars (both Tangier and Smith are dry). The islanders constitute a tough and independent lot: Tangier folks refused to join the Confederacy over slavery, while Rhodes Point village, on Smith Island, was once known as "Rogues Point" for area pirates who operated from there.

Visitors can explore on foot, by bike (rentals are available on-island), and by boat. Both islands offer overnight accommodations in a few B&Bs—and take pride in distinct local fare. Smith Island Cake, a towering layered confection, is Maryland's official dessert, while Tangier justly claims to be "the soft-shell crab capital" of the nation.

With their low-lying shores yielding to erosion and storm surges, these two marshy "islands out of time" may be running out of time. Yet islanders are fighting to hang on, holding fast as long as they can to their thin and vulnerable homes. –STEPHEN BLAKELY



Smith Island waterman Danny Tyler checks on his soft-shell crabs.

SOUTH GEORGIA ISLAND

Wild kingdom in the South Atlantic

ON A ROCKY BEACH, hundreds of thousands of noisy king penguins gather in a mosaic of black-and-white dots across grassy tussocks. Among them, fur seal pups bark, two-ton elephant seals galumph into the surf, and albatrosses patrol the air past slate gray cliffs and glaciers edging into the ocean.

Welcome to South Georgia Island, a hundred-mile-long expanse of peaks rising out of the South Atlantic 1,300 miles east of Ushuaia, Argentina. "It's complete sensory overload," says Eric Wehrmeister, a Lindblad videographer on the *National Geographic Explorer,* one of the few passenger ships that visit this remote isle. South Georgia was the promised land for shipwrecked explorer Ernest Shackleton and his crew, who, a hundred years ago, sailed 800 miles across one of Earth's most inhospitable seas in a lifeboat to get help here.

This British Overseas Territory is still reachable only by ship, and the five-day cruise from Ushuaia is strenuous, with summer temperatures in the 20s F. But brave it and you'll see mountains no human has climbed, rare whales—such as fin-blue hybrids—and inquisitive waist-high penguins in one of the only places that remain as wild as they were when explorers like Shackleton were still filling in blank spots on the map. –KATE SIBER



Visitors can view vast colonies of king penguins on South Georgia Island, a stop on Antarctic-bound cruises.





Capability Brown's design for the grounds at Burghley House included the narrow Serpentine Lake.



JASON HAWKES/CORBIS (ESTATE); PREVIOUS PAGES: FRANS LANTING/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (PENGUINS)

CAPABILITY BROWN'S GARDENS, BRITAIN

To the manor born

WITH A SCULPTOR'S discerning eye, the 18th-century landscape designer Lancelot Brown transformed Britain's grand country estates forever. Brown reshaped formal gardens into rolling green parklands across the length and breadth of the country. His habit of telling patrons that their grounds had great "capabilities" is said to have earned him the nickname Capability Brown.

The tercentenary, in 2016, of Brown's birth (in 1716) offers a compelling reason to visit his landscapes now. Filled with sparkling lakes, softly sloping lawns, winding paths, and carefully framed views, Brown's gardens are as ingrained in the British psyche as the novels of Jane Austen. In fact, filmmakers often set her stories in Brown landscapes, such as those at Chatsworth House and Burghley House (both appear in the 2005 film of *Pride and Prejudice*).

But Stowe estate, in Buckinghamshire, where Brown became head gardener for Lord Cobham in 1741, is where the seeds were sown for his vision of natural perfection. You can glimpse Brown's developing talent in its undulating Grecian Valley.

"Capability Brown accentuates the positives of topography," says historic-landscapes consultant Kate Felus. His design "is sculpture, like walking through a Henry Moore."

—JULIANA GILLING

RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, BRAZIL

Its nickname? "Bride of the Sun"

IN BRAZIL, WHERE IDYLLIC beach escapes come a dime a dozen, the northeastern state of Rio Grande do Norte is ready to reveal that it's more than another sun-and-surf getaway.

Famed for nonstop sands, sea salt products, and the world's largest cashew tree, this region known as Brazil's elbow is where the Atlantic seaboard makes a sensual swerve. The state capital, Natal, three hours by air north of Rio de Janeiro, reigns over a coastline that racks up some 233 days of sunshine a year. Recently, the state's arid interior region, the historically poor *sertão,* has been seeing unprecedented love and investment from both the public and private sectors. The sertão is rich in local culture (clay figurines, woven palm mats) and cuisine (sun-dried beef, cassava fries). It also is the cradle of *forró,* a rambunctious musical blend of accordion, triangle, and *zabumba* drums that sends couples twirling much as it did during World War II, when the area housed U.S. troops who used the state as a "Trampoline to Victory" in North Africa. To this day, Rio Grande do Norte is one of the most welcoming, and sun-splashed, places in Brazil. —MICHAEL SOMMERS



Creamy sand dunes at Genipabu Beach, in Natal, can be explored by buggy or dromedary.



ADAM HESTER/GETTY IMAGES (BEACH); KARI MEDIG/AURORA PHOTOS (COUPLE)



Cycling downtown Winnipeg

WINNIPEG, CANADA

Little spark on the prairie

WINNIPEG, THE CAPITAL OF Manitoba, doesn't usually find its way onto bucket lists. This multicultural, multilingual metropolis of 800,000, affectionately called the Peg by locals, blipped onto international radar screens in 2014 when the Canadian Museum for Human Rights opened here, and again this past summer when the FIFA Women's World Cup passed through.

Planted midway between Canada's Atlantic and Pacific coasts, Winnipeg is a whistle-stop on rail and road trips across Canada; polar bear and beluga whale enthusiasts know it as the starting point for their journey north to Churchill. But this unpretentious prairie city proves itself worthy of more than a glance from a train window.

Winnipeg's 30-block Exchange District hums with music venues, galleries, restaurants, and boutiques. Winter brings notoriously bone-chilling temperatures—but that doesn't stop Winnipeggers from skating the frozen Red River to applaud winners of the annual warming-hut competition, or heading to St. Boniface, Winnipeg's French quarter, for the Festival du Voyageur, one of the city's many festivals.

"I love the Peg," says Martina Hutchison, an assistant at the Manitoba Museum. "But I hate to brag too much about it because I don't want it to get any bigger." –KIMBERLEY LOVATO

ON THE WEB When to go, where to stay, and insider tips for each destination: *natgeotravel.com/best-trips-2016*. Check out our first-ever Pinterest contest: *http://nationalgeographic.com/2016-travel-wander-list-pinterest-contest/*

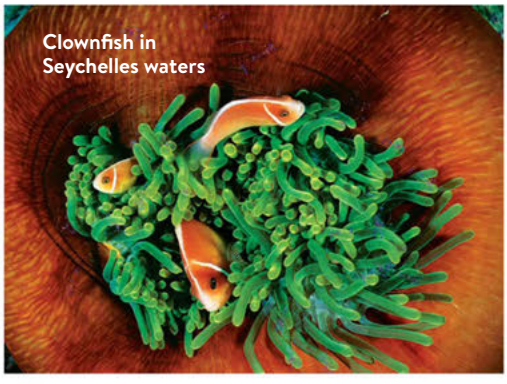
SEYCHELLES

Beauty and the bounty

NOTHING COULD keep Sherla Mathurin away from her native Seychelles for long, not even the opulence of Bahrain. The former private chef to a Bahrain royal now leads cooking classes in her homeland, using hand-selected spices, line-fished snapper, and octopus speared that same morning to create aromatic creole curries and seafood salads. Seychelles clearly has its own wealth.

Located 1,100 miles off Kenya's east coast, in the Indian Ocean, the Seychelles archipelago of 115 islands dishes up vistas so lush that they can stop a queen in her tracks. During a 1972 visit, Queen Elizabeth II halted her convoy at Mission Lodge, along the Sans Souci mountain road on the main island of Mahé, for an impromptu afternoon English tea with a view.

Six fiercely guarded marine national parks provide havens for endangered hawksbill turtles, spinner dolphins, and more than a thousand types of fish. You'll find Seychelles blue pigeons and other endemic species in the World Heritage Vallée de Mai Nature Reserve, on Praslin island, which looks like something out of *Jurassic World.* Among its large-leafed palm trees rise endemic coco-de-mer trees, which produce fruits that encase the largest seeds in the plant world. As in the garden of Eden, Seychelles flaunts its beauty with abandon. –LOLA AKINMADE



Clownfish in Seychelles waters



"Chocolate hills" of limestone on the Philippine isle of Bohol

PHILIPPINES

An island for every taste

IN EVERY FAMILY, there's always an odd one out—and in the clan of Asia-Pacific nations, that member would be the Philippines. This nation of 7,107 islands (about 2,000 inhabited) began as a loose grouping of Indo-Malay tribes, which endured nearly 400 years of Spanish rule, then 48 years as a U.S. territory. Today the Philippines is a mix of tribal pride, Catholic fervor, American pop-culture savvy, and tropical affability.

Most visitors don't linger in the muggy, traffic-clogged capital, Manila, but you should explore at least one of the Spanish churches in the old, walled center of Intramuros and stroll around Manila Bay at sunset.

Then head to some of the thousands of beaches, from the pink sands of Great Santa Cruz Island to the black sands of Albay. Divers off Palawan, Apo, and Siargao islands delight in hundreds of coral and fish species. On the southern isle of Mindanao, more than 1,300 land species—including the endangered Philippine eagle—reside in Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, which recently joined northern Luzon's rice terraces as a World Heritage site.

If the Philippines is that quirky member of the family, it also is the one that always invites you over for dinner, a uniquely Filipino fusion experience that intermingles salty, sour, and savory flavors. –ERIK R. TRINIDAD

DAVID DOUBILET/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (FISH), PER-ANDRE HOFFMANN/AURORA PHOTOS (HILLS), PAUL PANAYIOTOU/4CORNERS/SIME/ESTOCK (BRIDGE)

DANUBE RIVER

Blue or not, it blows our minds.

FLOWING ALMOST 1,800 miles from the Black Forest to the Black Sea, the Danube River has been the main thoroughfare through central and eastern Europe for millennia. Herodotus called it the "greatest of all rivers" 2,500 years ago, and it still may be. Winding through ten countries, it's like a medieval version of Route 66, except your stops will be at 13th-century Gothic churches rather than diners, and you'll be treated to views of Transylvania instead of tumbleweeds.

Imagine the spires of the palace-bedecked capitals of Vienna and Budapest slowly rising above the trees as your boat glides around a bend. Then picture docking beside Old World towns such as Regensburg, Germany, orphaned by the modern highway system but enjoying a tourism rebirth via the burgeoning number of Danube River vessels.

Back in 1933, as he sat beside the Danube, famed travel writer Patrick Leigh Fermor wrote: "I lay deep in one of those protracted moments of rapture that scatter this journey like asterisks. A little more, I felt, and I would have gone up like a rocket." Cruise along this legendary river, and you may feel the same. —BILL FINK



The Danube glitters in Budapest, Hungary, where the river glides under eight bridges.



OKAVANGO DELTA, BOTSWANA

All hail this African queen.

IN A PART OF THE WORLD not given to small gestures and bland landscapes, Botswana's Okavango Delta still manages to leap out at a person as a singularly unlikely miracle. A massive fan of water that gets its start in rivers percolating out of the deciduous forests of Angola's highlands, the delta evaporates 200 miles later in the sands of the Kalahari Desert. This wilderness is one of the last places to see the Big Five of the traditional African safari: elephant, lion, buffalo, leopard, and rhinoceros. It so nearly wasn't.

By the 1900s, European and American hunters had killed almost all of the area's elephants, without which crucial channels in the delta silt up. But in the decades that followed, conservationists reversed the near collapse of this exquisitely balanced ecosystem and, in June 2014, UNESCO designated it a World Heritage site. Still, the designation will be meaningless unless the Angolan and Namibian governments also ensure that the rivers feeding the delta are protected.

The romantic intimacy of the delta is best explored in a guided *mokoro* (dugout canoe). Experienced this way, the Okavango is Venice with wildlife. The flash of a malachite kingfisher, the mocking shout of hippos, the cry of a hadada ibis—each is a reminder that without wilderness we are diminished, lonelier. We humans are a part of, not apart from, our rich, rare, and fragile world. —ALEXANDRA FULLER



Botswana's Okavango Delta sometimes spills across more than 6,500 square miles, an ample runway for wildlife.



Bermuda's famed pink sands, here at Elbow Beach, are colored by tiny pink-shelled plankton called foraminifera.

BERMUDA

Because life is shorts

"I LOVE YOU! God loves you!" repeats Johnny Barnes, a 92-year-old Bermudian who waves at passing scooters and cars each weekday morning at a roundabout in Bermuda's capital of Hamilton.

"We may seem very proper," says taxi driver Larry Rogers, "but we are also an eccentric island." Indeed, scratch the immaculately gardened surface of this British overseas territory, and you'll find a place brimming with personality. Every year, participants in the Non-Mariners' Race vie to construct the shoddiest vessels to see who sinks fastest; descendants of Native Americans proudly hold powwows; and policemen and businessmen insist on wearing knee-high socks with their shorts, no matter what the rest of the world may think.

You can beat the crowd headed to Bermuda for 2017's America's Cup by going now, and don't forget to say hello to Johnny. —CHANEY KWAK



Stupas in eastern Bhutan

EASTERN BHUTAN

Next great adventure

THE LAST REMAINING Himalayan Buddhist kingdom, Bhutan is distant by most standards. Flying in requires a plane nimble enough to navigate around mountain peaks and land in Paro Valley, the main tourist hub, where the number of hotels has tripled over the past decade as the once isolated country opens to more visitors. Then there is eastern Bhutan. This far-flung region remains largely unexplored by tourists. But the arduous two-day journey there by 4x4 delivers many rewards.

"You are the first foreigner we have seen in 22 years," exclaims a surprised monk welcoming an American trekker to his mist-shrouded outpost near Mongar. In Lhuntse village, women display their vibrantly hued silk wares to Bhutanese traders, who travel here from the capital city of Thimphu in search of precious *kushutara* textiles. Family homestays fill in for hotels, offering travelers a place to sleep and dine on traditional dishes, including *ema datshi*, spicy chilies and cheese, often served with red rice. This is Bhutan at its most welcoming—the perfect adventure combination.

—COSTAS CHRIST

CÔTE D'OR, BURGUNDY, FRANCE

Best vantage on vintage France

WITH VINEYARDS first planted by ancient Romans, the Côte d'Or—the most revered winemaking area in Burgundy (Bourgogne)—draws wine pilgrims from around the globe. Natives here insist there's no place in France with wine traditions more deeply rooted, more consciously cherished. They have something else to be proud of: In July 2015, UNESCO inscribed the region on its World Heritage List. Plans for a new wine center, the Cité des Vins de Bourgogne, will further celebrate this hallowed terroir.

A far cry from Bordeaux's flat landscape, historically dominated by aristocratic families, the fabled chalk slopes of the Côte d'Or form a snaking ribbon of land in some places no more than a third of a mile wide. This labyrinthine wine terrain about three hours' drive southeast of Paris is owned by hundreds of farmers, many of them descendants of peasant families and some with just three rows of vines in a field the size of a bowling alley.

Rent a bicycle to taste your way along the Route des Grands Crus, which includes oenophile-magnet vineyards in Puligny-Montrachet. At neighborhood haunt La Grilladine, in the medieval town of Beaune, pair the beef bourguignonne with one of the local *vieilles vignes* (wine from old vines). End the day at Hôtel Le Cep, in Beaune's historic heart. Third-generation family owner Jean-Claude Bernard sets the tone, worldly yet down-to-earth. Which is to say, Burgundian to the core. —LIZ BEATTY



Vines in Pernand-Vergelesses, Burgundy

PIETRO CANALI/SIME/ESTOCK (BEACH); JOHNNY HAGLUND/GETTY IMAGES (STUPA); GÜNTER GRÄFENHAIN/SIME/ESTOCK (VINEYARDS); PREVIOUS PAGES: BOBBY HAAS/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE (GIRAFFES)



Savvy skiers head to the island of Hokkaido for dry, light snow (top). Après-skiers (above) chill at an ice bar in the resort of Niseko.

HOKKAIDO, JAPAN

Absolute powder

THOSE IN THE KNOW choose the isle of Hokkaido for a ski experience found nowhere else. Japan's northernmost island—surrounded by misty seas and chilled by nearby Siberia—is blessed in winter with almost daily snowfalls, accumulating on some mountains to an extraordinary 63 feet. The *yuki* (snow) comes down very dry and light, creating a powder Valhalla for skiers and snowboarders.

Niseko, on the southwest corner of Hokkaido, may be the most popular of the resorts, but Kiroro, a two-hour drive from Sapporo's Chitose Airport, is the real find. Here, youngsters play and learn in the Annie Kids Ski Academy, while ambitious free-riding skiers make endless fresh tracks on Nagamine and Asari peaks. More adventurous skiers hike to the summit of nearby Yoichidake volcano on a two-hour guided backcountry tour that leads to mystical views and even more pristine off-piste terrain.

Back down in the valley, it's time for après-ski, with a visit to Shinrin no Yu Onsen—Kiroro Resort's natural hot baths—followed by exquisite sushi or yakitori dishes in one of the resort restaurants, along with a tipple of locally distilled Yoichi whiskey.

Then allow the day's experiences to center you in the here and now as the snowflakes outside fall with the calm of zen. –MENNO BOERMANS

MENNO BOERMANS (SKIER), MARKUS KIRCHGESSNER/LAIF/REDUX (ICE BAR)



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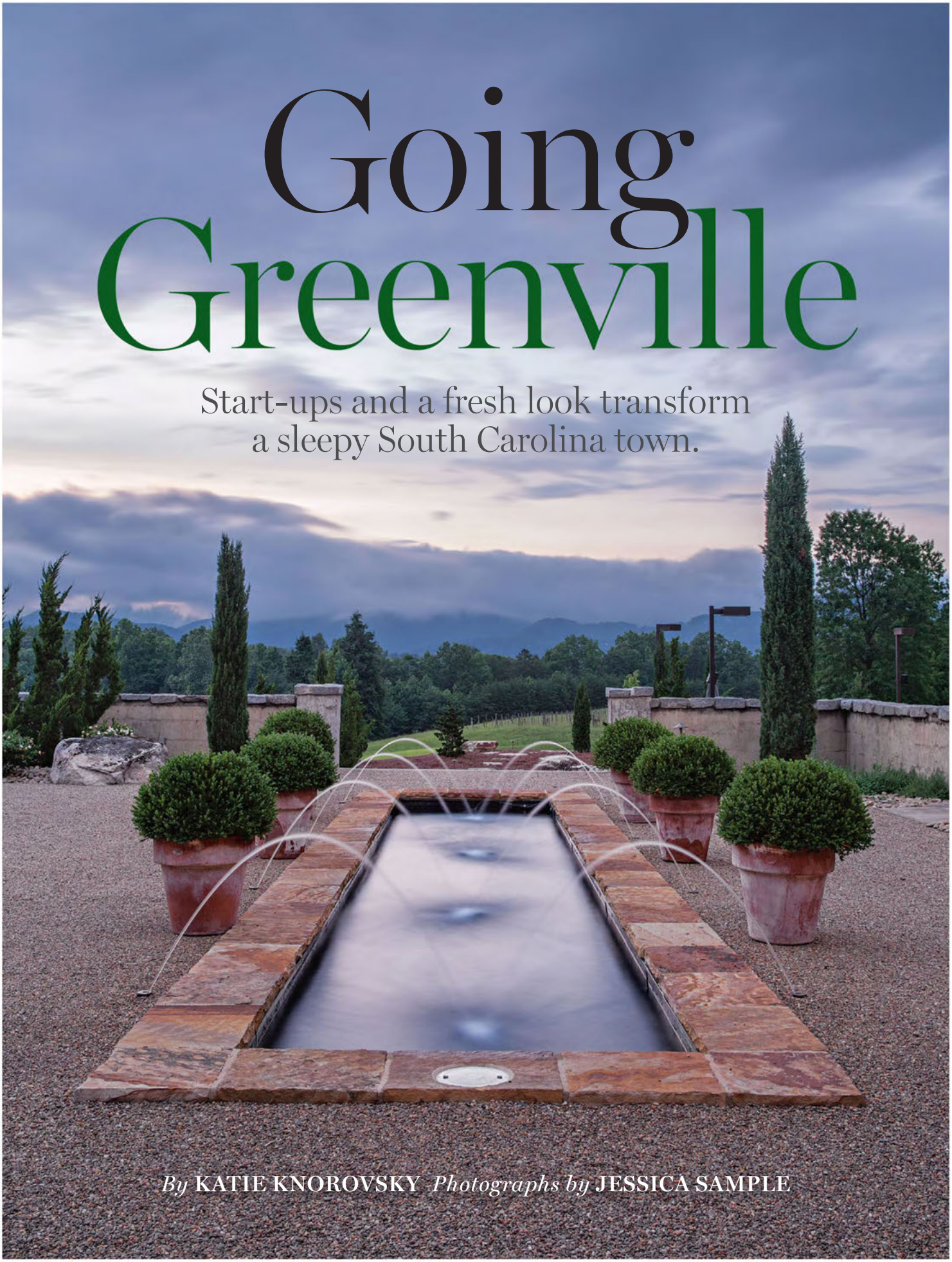
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Entrepreneurship has found a new home in Greenville. Will Shurtz, co-owner of Methodical Coffee, can talk you through the flavors of various roasts. Views of Blue Ridge foothills inspired the landscape terrace (opposite) at Hotel Domestique, created by Tour de France veteran George Hincapie.

Going Greenville

Start-ups and a fresh look transform a sleepy South Carolina town.



By KATIE KNOROVSKY *Photographs by* JESSICA SAMPLE

IN A BLACK-AND-WHITE SHEATH DRESS and sporting a pixie haircut, Cherington Love Shucker emanates the no-nonsense cool you'd expect from a former New Yorker. Then she breaks into a warm smile that's unmistakably southern. We're at the old Brandon Mill, in Greenville, in the northwestern corner of South Carolina. A native who returned last year after two decades away, Shucker now serves as executive director of the new Greenville Center for Creative Arts, housed here. The brainchild of two women—one in her 70s, one in her 80s— and founded as a gift to the next generation, the gallery and art school opened in this historic cotton factory in May.



"People in Greenville love ideas," says Shucker, who served a stint as a Henry Luce scholar in Guangzhou, China. Over the past decade, the three-day, juried Artisphere festival put her hometown on the national art map and, on a personal level, helped persuade her and her artist husband to relocate from Manhattan.

Ideas are what got me here, too—not just to this town of some 61,000 in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains but to the South. Born and raised in Iowa, I spent my 20s chasing opportunity in Washington, D.C. When my 30s brought a shift in priorities, friends began to eye suburbia, but my husband and I found ourselves dreaming instead of a place with room for ambitions to grow. A place where change didn't require an act of Congress—or a trust fund.

Our horizons expanded south. Make that the New South, to rising cities—led by big-personality destinations like Nashville, Tennessee, and Austin, Texas—where a start-up culture has replaced industry, forging new, more inclusive paths along the way. Soon after moving to Asheville, North Carolina, we kept hearing about nearby Greenville. A colleague described the sunny hills of the surrounding countryside as the Tuscany of the South. A news article heralded a plan for an elevated public transportation system made up of Jetsons-esque pods. *Fast Company* magazine dubbed Greenville "the knowledge economy's next big thing." Billboards and radio ads parroted the city's quirky tourism slogan: "Yeah, *that* Greenville." I needed to see for myself what was happening.

ON MY HOUR-LONG DRIVE south from hippie Asheville, I pass the roadside Dixie Republic souvenir shop with its Confederate flags flying. Things feel more inviting as I enter the city limits.

I meet walking guide John Nolan at Greenville's nucleus: Falls Park, where a nearly 40-foot natural waterfall churns just off Main Street. A pedestrian-only bridge curves overhead. It's a bright spring day, and locals and tourists line up under the



An award-winning span, the pedestrian Liberty Bridge in Greenville's Falls Park allows passersby to linger above downtown waterfalls. At Dapper Ink, screen-printed T-shirts (opposite) tout city pride.





suspension cables. Kids scramble across the rocks, testing their limits as they venture one step closer to the spray.

"Whenever it warms up, people swarm down here," Nolan says. Much credit for Greenville's new groove goes to five-term Mayor Knox White, who has spent the past two decades showing how to turn an idea—make Greenville "the most beautiful and livable city in America"—into a movement. White persuaded officials to tear down a heavily used, four-lane bridge that for decades blocked the falls. The city cleaned up the long-ignored Reedy River and built Falls Park, which became an instant community gathering space when it opened in 2004. Five years later, the Swamp Rabbit Trail transformed an old railroad bed. Packed with cyclists and runners year-round, the 18.7-mile paved path connects Falls Park north to the 19th-century stagecoach stop of Travelers Rest. Like the wisteria lining the trail, development has blossomed on both ends of the corridor.

As we walk along the river, Nolan points out where textile mills propelled the city through much of the 20th century. He also mentions how his small tour company hopes to begin offering foreign language tours, an outgrowth of the innovative tech and auto programs now fueling the region.

More than 40 *Fortune* 500 companies operate here, among them General Electric, Fluor, and Lockheed Martin. Michelin has been here since 1975, and Greenville County claims the highest foreign manufacturing investment per capita in the nation. About 15 miles east of downtown, just past the international airport, BMW recently rolled its three millionth car off the line at its only American production plant. Later, when I stop by BMW's sleek Zentrum visitor museum, teens pose for photos in front of the Z3 roadster, made famous by James Bond. But I'm more drawn to the mounted engines, which look like physical manifestations of the brainpower gathered in this unlikely pocket of the country.

After Nolan and I part ways, I find a bench across the street from the entrance to Falls Park to gather my thoughts. A gentleman seated next to me looks up from his book, his contemplative gaze cast in bronze. The statue is of local hero Charles Townes, an inventor of the laser. A plaque on the bench encourages me to stop and rest a while: "You, too, may have your own revelation."

PERHAPS THE BIGGEST revelation is Greenville's urbane downtown. On Main Street you're as likely to hear a southern drawl as you are to catch snippets of French or German. The blocks around the thoroughfare hum with scores of restaurants and bars, serving Persian *mezze* and lamb shank, rare Belgian Trappist beer and southern novelties like fried green tomatoes dipped in pimento cheese fondue. Anchoring the scene, the 2,100-seat Peace Center brings in everything from Broadway shows to

The Station, an art collective launched in August 2014 and run by women, fuels First Friday festivities in the Village of West Greenville with art parties held in a former gas station.



Near Liberty Bridge, Passerelle Bistro serves French fare. Bird portraits on wood (opposite), by Diane Kilgore Condon, alight at Art & Light Studios in the Village of West Greenville.



Sheryl Crow—and featured National Geographic speakers.

David Baker greets me at Methodical Coffee, his sparkling, glass-fronted café facing a shaded plaza. Baker "fell in love with craft coffee" while running a hostel in Prague. He and his wife eyed Austin, but in the end chose to return to their hometown.

"We felt we could make a larger impact here," he says, sipping a cappuccino from a blue willow china cup.

When I mention the Indie Craft Parade, an annual fair for handmade goods, Baker pulls out his phone to text his friend Lib Ramos, one of the event's founders. Now in its sixth year, the fair has evolved into an empire in progress called the Makers Collective. Turns out Ramos, a graphic designer by trade, works upstairs in the office building. A couple of minutes later, she pops down to say hi.

This isn't my first clue that a close-knit community beats at the heart of Greenville. Deep-pocketed investors may help pay the bills, but that old-fashioned southern charm is what nurtures growth.



A few blocks away, flower boxes brighten the slate-hued building that houses Pedal Chic, America's first women-specific bike shop. Inside, owner Robin Lennon Bylenga folds up the hem on a pair of stretch jeans to reveal reflective seaming in Levi's new line of women's commuter apparel, which she proudly tells me debuted at only a few stores around the country. Helmets stamped with daisies hang near sleek, carbon-frame road bikes.

A single mom and longtime cyclist, Bylenga opened Pedal Chic in 2010, the same year she completed seven triathlons. A loan from Michelin helped her get the store up and running. "People were shocked that this concept was developed in Greenville," admits Bylenga, who has been featured on CNN and in *Money* magazine. She speaks tirelessly about the power of women on bikes. A group ride on Wednesday evenings is followed by wine and potluck appetizers in the shop's courtyard. Consider it a hub-and-spoke model of community building.

Clockwise from top left: Pedal Chic provides a hub for bicycling women; Lily Wikoff creates jewelry at her studio/shop Lily Pottery, in the Village of West Greenville; mussels with saffron pump up the menu at Passerelle Bistro; Chancey Lindsey-Peake (with husband, Dennis) is the banana bread queen behind Banana Manna bakery.

BACK AT THE BRANDON MILL, Shucker and I climb the stairs to the third floor, where the complex's past surfaces next to its future. Old footprints in the hardwood floor, near easels set up for a drawing class, recall the mill days when workers assembled up here to inspect cloth.

As we walk through the cavernous room, Shucker slips from polished PR woman to laid-back southern girl. She acknowledges a certain evolution in Greenville since her childhood, thanks in part to the influx of international influences. Yet she maintains that the "Greenville way" has always meant working to make the path broader for those who follow.

"Growing up here, I got the experience of 'everybody knows who your mama is,' so you stay on your best behavior," she says with a belly laugh.

Today, part of that work revolves around reaching the segment of the city pegged as "unseen Greenville." In well-heeled areas such as downtown, racial diversity can be hard to find. Crossing town through neighborhoods reveals a much wider story than the one Main Street tells. For its part, the Greenville Center for Creative Arts offers fellowships and exhibitions intended to cast light on all facets of the arts scene. "We want to be a place for smart conversation," Shucker says, not least because the center itself sits on the fringes of western Greenville.

I look out the window, and Shucker lights up describing this, her favorite view. The rusty Brandon water tower rises above fresh landscaping and bright crepe myrtle. Next to us is the park where Shoeless Joe Jackson grew up playing ball. Beyond the chain-link fencing of the parking lot, a brick building at the end of the road marks the start of the burgeoning arts district known as the Village of West Greenville. Around the corner, Shucker's husband, Darin Gehrke, sells his Asian-inspired, wood-fired vases and teapots in an airy gallery. Less than two years ago, his studio was a cramped fourth-floor space in Manhattan's Garment District.

"I love that my three-and-a-half-year-old daughter has a village that's helping to raise her now," says Shucker. "She remembers New York. I recently asked her, 'Do you love living in Greenville?' She said, 'Yes, because I can take my shoes off and run in the grass.'"

I know the feeling. From its magnetic downtown to the visionary locals I've met at every turn, this place makes me want to kick off my heels and stay awhile too.

Traveler *contributing editor* KATIE KNOROVSKY *is managing editor of* Smoky Mountain Living *magazine. This feature is photographer* JESSICA SAMPLE*'s first for* Traveler.

NG MAPS/OPENSTREETMAPS


PEDAL CHIC
Bike
& Active
Wear
Boutique
Maintenance
Rentals
Group Rides
Bike Bling
PEDAL CHIC




Banana Manna
Chancey



TOP PICKS

THE BEST OF GREENVILLE

GREENVILLE HISTORY TOURS Explore downtown on foot with local guidebook author John Nolan. The West End walking tour begins at Falls Park; Nolan recounts how the Cherokee and Catawba once hunted buffalo in this area, before it emerged as a leader in the textile industry.

SWAMP RABBIT TRAIL Hop on this paved trail at Falls Park and gradually climb to Travelers Rest. In downtown Greenville, Pedal Chic and Reedy Rides offer bike rentals.

WHERE THE ART IS Check out the free Greenville County Museum of Art, which mounts a digestible collection of Jasper Johns prints, Andrew Wyeth watercolors, and a survey of notable southern works. Old-master Christian paintings more to your liking? The labyrinthine treasury at the Museum and Gallery at Bob Jones University rivals the Vatican.



ZENTRUM North America's only BMW museum provides a free look at the German automotive giant's heritage and the chance to admire rare rides, such as the famous Isetta "bubble car" (above). Renovations are planned; call ahead to confirm opening hours.

POMEGRANATE ON MAIN Ask for a seat in the restaurant's courtyard, where a blue-tile fountain bubbles next to diners sharing savory *mezze* (small plates) while slurping Persian black tea the traditional way: through sugar cubes.



George Hincapie, owner of Hotel Domestique

OUT-OF-TOWN STAY

Beds and Bikes

Geared toward bike lovers, Hotel Domestique carves out a piece of Tuscany in the rolling Blue Ridge foothills about 20 miles north of Greenville. The high-end hotel also attracts local cyclists, who refuel on French pastries and recovery shakes at its Café 17. Front desk clerks print out cue sheets that break down area rides.



Downtown's Main Street Bridge

BEST FESTIVAL

Artisphere

One of the country's top juried annual arts fairs takes place May 13-15 in 2016.

MEAL WITH A VIEW

Passerelle Bistro

From the patio, enjoy the vista over Falls Park along with Niçoise salads and mussels.

CRAFT COCKTAILS

American Grocery Restaurant

Try the Manhattan made with "beer jam," a sudsy syrup boiled with bourbon and cherry juice.



TOP SHOP

Billiam

Owner Bill Mitchell crafts leather belts (above) and custom jeans made from raw denim, donating 20 percent of profits to fight sex trafficking.

JESSICA SAMPLE (ALL PHOTOS)

REPORTED BY KATIE KNOROVSKY

eye to eye

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UPON THE BEACH OF SUNNY Mozambique

By **DOUGLAS ROGERS**
Photographs by **MASSIMO BASSANO**



A SON EMBARKS ON A WISTFUL VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY TO FAR ISLES WHERE HIS PARENTS HONEYMOONED.



Sand flats and dunes along Mozambique's south coast goad riders into a canter. These beaches, for decades a quiet resort area near the town of Vilankulo, sport a range of hotels, including the art deco Dona Ana (opposite).

AND WHEN IT'S TIME FOR LEAVING MOZAMBIQUE
TO SAY GOODBYE TO SAND AND SEA
YOU TURN AROUND TO TAKE A FINAL PEEK
AND YOU SEE WHY IT'S SO UNIQUE TO BE
AMONG THE LOVELY PEOPLE LIVING FREE
UPON THE BEACH OF SUNNY MOZAMBIQUE.

—BOB DYLAN

"Want to take her for a swim?" Pat Retzlaff, expert horseman and guide, asks me.

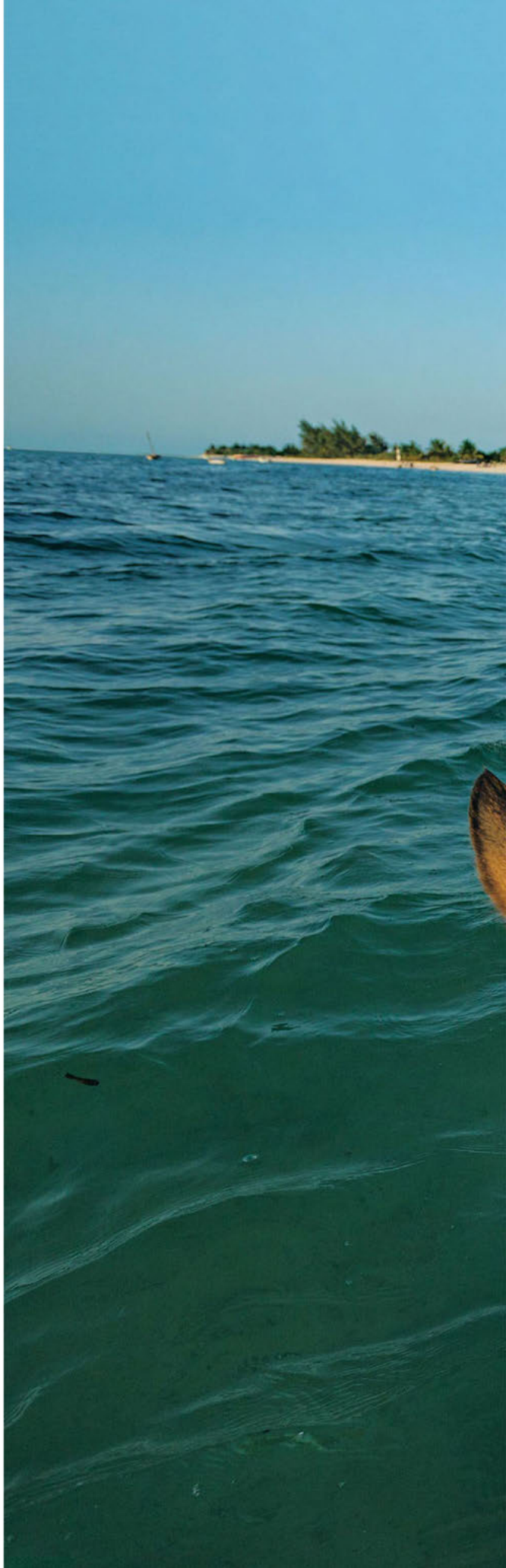
"Sure," I reply. I'm astride Holly, a chestnut mare that belongs to Retzlaff's stable of safari horses. I'm expecting a gentle trot through the shallow waters of the Indian Ocean on our way back to my beach lodge on the coast of Mozambique.

Retzlaff has other ideas.

He begins to ride his gray mare, Jade, straight out into the aquamarine ocean.

I'm no rider—I've barely managed to stay in the saddle the past hour—but the only option is to follow. Certainly, Holly is eager to do so. We head deeper and deeper into the water. I keep expecting Retzlaff to turn back, but on he goes, and soon our horses are shoulder deep. The Indian Ocean laps at my hips. Just ahead, the water turns from the translucent green of the shallows to the cobalt blue of the deep. Thankfully, Holly stops on the safety of a sandbar, as if on the edge of the continent. One more step and she'd be underwater. Suddenly, she lunges forward with a giant leap—of faith or courage, I can't be sure—and begins to swim. I feel the surge of current at my feet as her neck arches forward and her legs churn the water. My heart racing, I shout, elated, as we move in glorious circles. Retzlaff calmly watches from the sandbar as if he's seen it all before.

I'VE COME TO MOZAMBIQUE to test the waters of this rapidly changing African nation. Only 40 years ago it declared independence after almost five centuries as a Portuguese colony. Twenty years ago, ravaged by years of Marxist misrule and





Easy riders, horseback excursionists take to the waters off Benguerra Island.

a brutal civil war between anticommunist fighters and forces funded by the Soviet Union that claimed thousands of lives, it was one of the poorest lands on Earth. Today it tends one of the world's fastest-growing economies and is framing itself as southern Africa's beach destination. Mozambique's shoreline, at 1,540 miles, is about the length of the U.S. west coast.

I want to experience the southern part of the coast, known for the seaside town of Vilankulo and the five islands that form Bazaruto Archipelago National Park, recognized by the World Wildlife Fund as a "Gift to the Earth." Until recently a crumbling port, Vilankulo now is popular for its seafood eateries, budget lodgings, diving, and dhow safaris to the archipelago, where three of the islands—Magaruque, Benguerra, and Bazaruto—



Water lilies pad a coastal wetland that attracts an abundance of bird species, amphibians—and canoe-paddling visitors eager to spot them.

have seen a slate of resorts and hotels open. But it's the small jewel of an island named Santa Carolina that holds particular allure for me. Santa Carolina is where my parents honeymooned, back when it was known as Paradise Island, at the Hotel Santa Carolina—and where a young Bob Dylan is said to have stayed in the 1970s, inspiring his song "Mozambique."

Most visitors fly to Vilankulo from Johannesburg. I drive from my parents' home in Zimbabwe, 350 miles to the west, where I was born. A decade ago the drive took 24 hours. Now I do it in seven, on mostly smooth roads. Enormous trucks piled high with coal, cotton, and lumber—commodities that have helped fuel Mozambique's economic boom—thunder by in both directions, through roadside villages where kids sell cashews, mangoes, bananas, and pineapples. I buy several pineapples; you never know when you may need a piña colada.

I reach Vilankulo at dusk and check into a beach resort called Archipelago. Finding my way to one of its 18 teak-and-thatch "casas," scattered on a landscaped cliff overlooking Vilankulo bay, I gaze out on the islands of the Bazaruto Archipelago, shimmering in the twilight, then turn in early.

The following morning I awake at dawn to an ancient sight: Fishermen in dhows—traditional wooden vessels powered by billowing cloth sails—and rugged canoes are rowing out to cast nets into the silvery water, their oars slapping the silence. Arab traders sailed dhows to these shores more than a thousand years ago, as they trafficked in slaves, pearls, and ivory. In fact, Mozambique is said to be named for an Arab trader and ruler, Moussa ben Mbiki, who settled here in the 1400s. I find the ruins of a trading post from that time, along with scatterings of pot sherds, a short walk south of Vilankulo. I try to imagine the sea filled with the vessels, bringing textiles and other wares.

These days dhows ferry visitors to the islands. It's how I'm planning to reach them.

"Mr. E? Mr. E?"

I'm in a dusty yard of bougainvillea, palm trees, and reed huts just off the town's main beach, looking for my former elementary school teacher. His name is Richard Eatwell, and the last time I saw him was 1980, when I was a 12-year-old kid and he a 20-something Englishman drawn to a newly independent Zimbabwe. Like thousands of Zimbabweans, he'd recently landed in Mozambique.

"Douglas, that you?" comes an English accent, and I spot him, smoking and sipping tea in the shade of the main hut. He looks like a pirate—bronze, weathered face, gap teeth. A half-eaten coconut sits on the table; an astronomical map covers a wall. All that's missing is a parrot.

Eatwell smiles as I approach, his gray eyes twinkling.

"Welcome to my office," he says. "Beats a classroom, doesn't it?" Yes, it does. "Mozambique—it's the Wild West out here," he exclaims. "But I love it. The ocean, the people, the food..."

I tell him I'm looking for a dhow to sail me to Santa Carolina. His eyes take on a gleam.

"Ah, Santa Carolina, my favorite," he declares, then suggests Sailaway Dhow Safaris, a company that runs trips to the archipelago and surrounding marine national park. Since there is nowhere to stay on Santa Carolina, he recommends sailing to Benguerra Island the following morning and spending the night in one of its lodges.

This suddenly frees up my afternoon, so I head to town. Docking dhows are busily disgorging fish and commuting



Passengers on a day cruise disembark for lunch on Magaruque, a private resort island. Sunrise (top) brightens guest cottages at the Archipelago Resort.





islanders near pleasure yachts dancing on the waves. *Tuk-tuks,* motorized rickshaws, buzz passengers down narrow streets shaded by casuarina trees. Then I spot the Dona Ana, an art deco hotel done in creams and pinks, overlooking Vilankulo's harbor. The town belle in its 1960s heyday, it was reduced to a dilapidated wreck during the civil war. A multimillion-dollar face-lift now has it resembling something from Miami's South Beach. Just to the north of it, along a beach, I find Casa Rex, a boutique hotel owned by a fellow Zimbabwean. I enter the hacienda-style lodge, centered around a cozy lobby opening onto green lawns. Between gaps in the frangipani bushes I make out kiteboarders leaping the waves on the bay below.

I've settled in on the hotel terrace for a lunch of grilled prawns cooked with a *piri-piri,* or pepper, sauce—Mozambique's most celebrated dish—when Susana Vidal, a native of Portugal, asks to join me. I comment that she's far from home, and she nods.

"I moved here after Portugal's 2008 financial crash, when I was unable to find work. I applied for jobs in former Portuguese colonies; Mozambique was the first to get back to me."

IT'S A DRIZZLY, windswept morning, and I am one of two passengers on Sailaway Dhow Safaris' *Adriana.* The vessel is a piece of work, made with three types of wood and painted in tropical greens and purples. Seating is on benches under an angled boom. *Adriana* is not built for comfort, and she smells

NG MAPS; PARKS DATA FROM THE WORLD DATABASE ON PROTECTED AREAS (WDPA)



Sail unfurled, a dhow heads out to the Bazaruto islands. The archipelago's seafood-rich currents supply vendor tables (opposite) at Vilankulo's busy municipal market.



Its glory days past, the once exclusive Santa Carolina Hotel entertained guests from around the world, including the author's parents—and, it's said, singer Bob Dylan.

of diesel, fish, and sea salt, but she is sturdy as an ocean liner. I love every second of our four-hour sail to Benguerra Lodge.

Captain Mattheus Marrovissane knows these waters intimately; he has navigated the ever shifting sandbars many times, carefully avoiding the "washing machine," a powerful riptide between Magaruque and Benguerra that I see churning ahead. Also on board is guide Duma Mufume, the son of a shipwright. Although only two years older than I, Mufume vividly recalls colonial Mozambique's tourism high point, in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

"We had so many visitors. People would stay at the Dona Ana, built by Portuguese businessman Joaquim Alves and named after his wife, Ana, a mulatto from Mambone, then take a ferry to Santa Carolina, where Senhor Alves owned the Hotel Santa Carolina."

My face lights up. "Did you go there?"

"Many times! I was only a boy, but my uncle worked there. Tourists would come from all over—Rhodesians, Americans, Europeans. We had ballrooms, restaurants, a piano..."

Then, in the late 1970s, the civil war worsened.

"There was so much fighting in the countryside that people escaped here to Vilankulo. Many moved even farther, to the islands, to be safe. For a long time there were no tourists at all."

Inevitably, he notes, the hotels were abandoned. Only in 1992, when a fragile peace treaty was signed (it's still being tested today), did a slow recovery begin. Mufume smiles: "Although we still have a way to go, Mozambique is coming back."

By midmorning, the drizzle has stopped, we're in open water, the cloth sail is unfurled, and charcoal burns in a box stove—a crab curry is cooking. Around noon, we drop anchor, and I leap overboard to snorkel a reef just off Benguerra beach. The water is so clear I spot sea stars smudged pink on the white-sand bottom and catch the flash of a ray between corals. Little angelfish nibble at my fingertips.

The Bazaruto Archipelago was declared a 550-square-mile marine reserve in 1971 and today is home to many rare species, including the last viable population of manatee-like dugongs in East Africa. These draw visitors to locally flavored resorts, such as &Beyond's Benguerra Lodge, where I'm staying on Benguerra Island. My *casinha,* really a villa, comes with a king-size canopy bed and a wood deck, from which I can make out the lodge's private catamaran bobbing in the bay. The nearby beach tempts me, but local developer and guide Billy Landrey wants to show me around.

I expect a tropical paradise of sand, palm trees, and coconuts. Instead, the interior reminds me of inland savanna, a landscape







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of grasses and freshwater lakes filled with Nile crocodiles.

"Thousands of years ago, Benguerra Island was part of the mainland," Landrey explains. "Hippopotamuses lived in these lakes until the 1960s."

Now a flock of pink flamingos has turned the water in one secluded cove a fluorescent red; around them, green-and-red Narina trogon birds dart among ironwood trees.

We drive on to the east side of the island, and soon Landrey parks at the foot of a sand dune large as a pyramid. We hike to the top—and the view that greets us stops me in my tracks. To the east, on the open ocean side, waves pound a long barrier reef. To the north and south, green islands haloed by powdery white sand and turquoise waters glimmer. One looks as if it could be Santa Carolina. "No, Bazaruto," Landrey corrects me. "Santa Carolina is to its north."

At that moment, the island where my parents honeymooned, and my chances of ever seeing it, seem farther away than ever.

THANK GOODNESS for Pat Retzlaff and his horses. I had heard them on my very first morning in Vilankulo, their hooves thumping loudly along the beach. When I'd wandered down to investigate, Pat and his wife, Mandy, fellow Zimbabweans and owners of Mozambique Horse Safari, introduced themselves. I booked a ride with Pat, a cowboy of a man, for the following morning—the excursion in which Holly the mare and I would share our swim. That evening I'd joined the Retzlaffs and their son Jay for dinner at their home overlooking the ocean near Chibuene. I'd brought my pineapples and a bottle of *tipo tinto,* a potent local rum, and soon we were downing piña coladas while supping on prawns as a breeze rustled the baobabs.

Of all the "starting over" stories I have heard, that of the Retzlaffs has to be the most remarkable. In 2001 their farm in Zimbabwe was seized during a governmental redistribution of land. Looking to find a new home, they traveled for months, like modern-day nomads, with their horses. Along the way they ended up rescuing horses abandoned by their displaced owners, at one point caring for 250.

"But we never found a new home in Zimbabwe," blue-eyed Mandy, who "has crested 60," tells me. "So we came here, to Mozambique," crossing the same border I had—with 104 horses in tow. It took them two years filled with obstacles to reach Vilankulo, an odyssey that Mandy recounts in her book, *One Hundred and Four Horses.*

Santa Carolina being now almost the only thing I can think about, I ask my new friends the best way to reach it. Jay makes some calls.

"A day-trip leaves crack of dawn tomorrow from Inhassôro," he tells me. "That's an hour north of here. You may want an early night."

I wake before dawn and barrel north like a race-car driver to beat the sunrise. Reaching Inhassôro, I spot a band of burly South African travelers strapped into life jackets and piling into a pair of rubber dinghies. I join them, we gun the engines, and the blue waters of the Indian Ocean froth under us. The ride takes an hour, including a stop to buy an octopus from a fisherman who has rowed a boat the size of a bucket two miles out to sea. "Bait," explain the Afrikaners.

As we approach Santa Carolina, there's not a soul to be seen. We pull into a cove with sand so white, it hurts my eyes.

I blink, scan my surroundings, and head into the dense island scrub. Twenty minutes of walking on spiky casuarina cones brings me to a potholed airstrip. Just beyond, I push away some palm fronds and spot it: Hotel Santa Carolina, where my newlywed parents began their life together.

I feel as though I've stumbled on a lost city.

Following a crumbling sidewalk, grass shooting through its edges, I make my way to the sprawling concrete shell, which fronts the island's eastern shore. Finding a flight of stairs, I climb up one flight, turn right, and step into a room. Hundreds of tiny pink tiles lie scattered across the floor. I pick a few up as mementos, then look out from the balcony toward a chapel, its roof swooping like some Palm Springs modern masterpiece, perched on nearby rocks.

I continue to the top floor, and into the ballroom. Its walls and windows long since shattered by waves and cyclones, the space is open to the elements. But in its middle is a spectacular sight: a pillar inlaid with thousands of tiny blue tiles painstakingly pieced together by artisans half a century ago. Even more unbelievable to me is a piano, leaning against the back wall, the ivories long since pilfered.

Did Bob Dylan compose his song "Mozambique" on it?

The lyrics come to me on the wind.

I like to spend some time in Mozambique
The sunny sky is aqua blue
And all the couples dancing cheek to cheek
It's very nice to stay a week or two…

I flash to one couple in particular. It's 1963. My parents, full of youthful optimism, are dancing on this very floor.

I reach for my cellphone and make a call. My mother's voice comes on the answering machine.

"Mom," I say, "I'm here on Paradise Island, at the Santa Carolina Hotel. Tell Dad."

I take a final look, snap some pictures, and head back to the waiting boat. I can't wait until my parents pick up my message.

DOUGLAS ROGERS *is the author of* The Last Resort: A Memoir of Zimbabwe. *He has written for* Travel Africa *magazine and the* Guardian. *Italy-based photographer* **MASSIMO BASSANO** *also serves as a traveling expert with National Geographic Expeditions.*

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EQUINE EXPEDITION Scout the landscapes around Vilankulo and Bazaruto National Park on horseback with Mozambique Horse Safari. Keep an eye out for birds (eagles, kingfishers) and endangered dugongs. Safaris range from an afternoon to a week.

SAIL AWAY Cruise the Bazaruto Archipelago in a traditional way, aboard a dhow; outfitters include Sailaway Dhow Safaris and Sunset Dhow Safaris. Like diving? Visit the Odyssea Dive Center.

DESIGN DO-OVER Art deco flirts with Mozambican and Portuguese vernacular styles in the newly renovated Hotel Dona Ana, built in 1960. Sip cocktails in the Seta bar, then feast on *piri-piri* prawns at the restaurant.



Prawns in *piri-piri* (pepper) sauce

PADDLE POWER Discover the Govuro River wetlands—a world of water lilies, reed beds, tropical birds, fish, and amphibians—on a leisurely canoe outing with South East Africa Safaris.

FLY BY KITE Secluded North Beach attracts kitesurfers from around the world. Learn the sport with outfitter Vilancool, which also runs snorkeling excursions—and has a villa for rent.

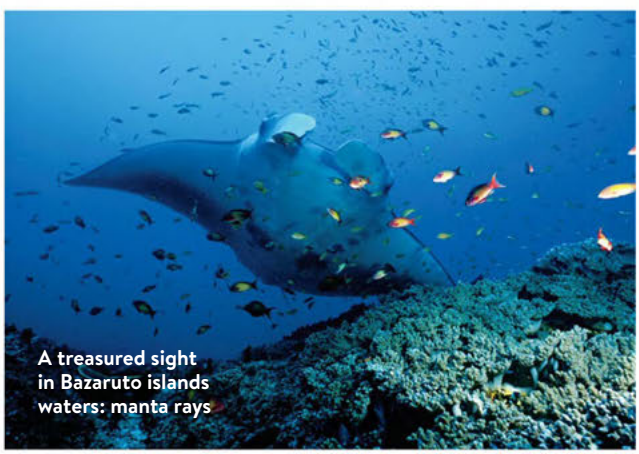


Textiles for sale dance in a beachside breeze.

DAY-TRIP

Coastal Highlights

Four hours south of Vilankulo sits Inhambane, a port and trading town since the 1100s. Walk its streets and you see vintage Arab and Portuguese colonial buildings; the Mercado Central, where vendors deal in fish and produce; and the 19th-century Cathedral of Our Lady of Conception. Then head to Tofo, a beach area on a nearby peninsula, to visit the local Manta Ray and Whale Shark Research Centre, based at Casa Barry Lodge.



A treasured sight in Bazaruto islands waters: manta rays

SOUVENIR

Horn Bracelet

Pick up a bracelet made from the horn of a Nguni cow; thick yet light, the horn has the color and texture of mother of pearl.

FLAVOR

Savory *Matapa*

Mozambique's specialty is *matapa*, ground cassava leaves cooked with peanuts and served with shrimp or crab.

MARKET

Soft Wares

Artisans sell their work—jewelry, textiles—at Machilla Magic, a communal gallery.

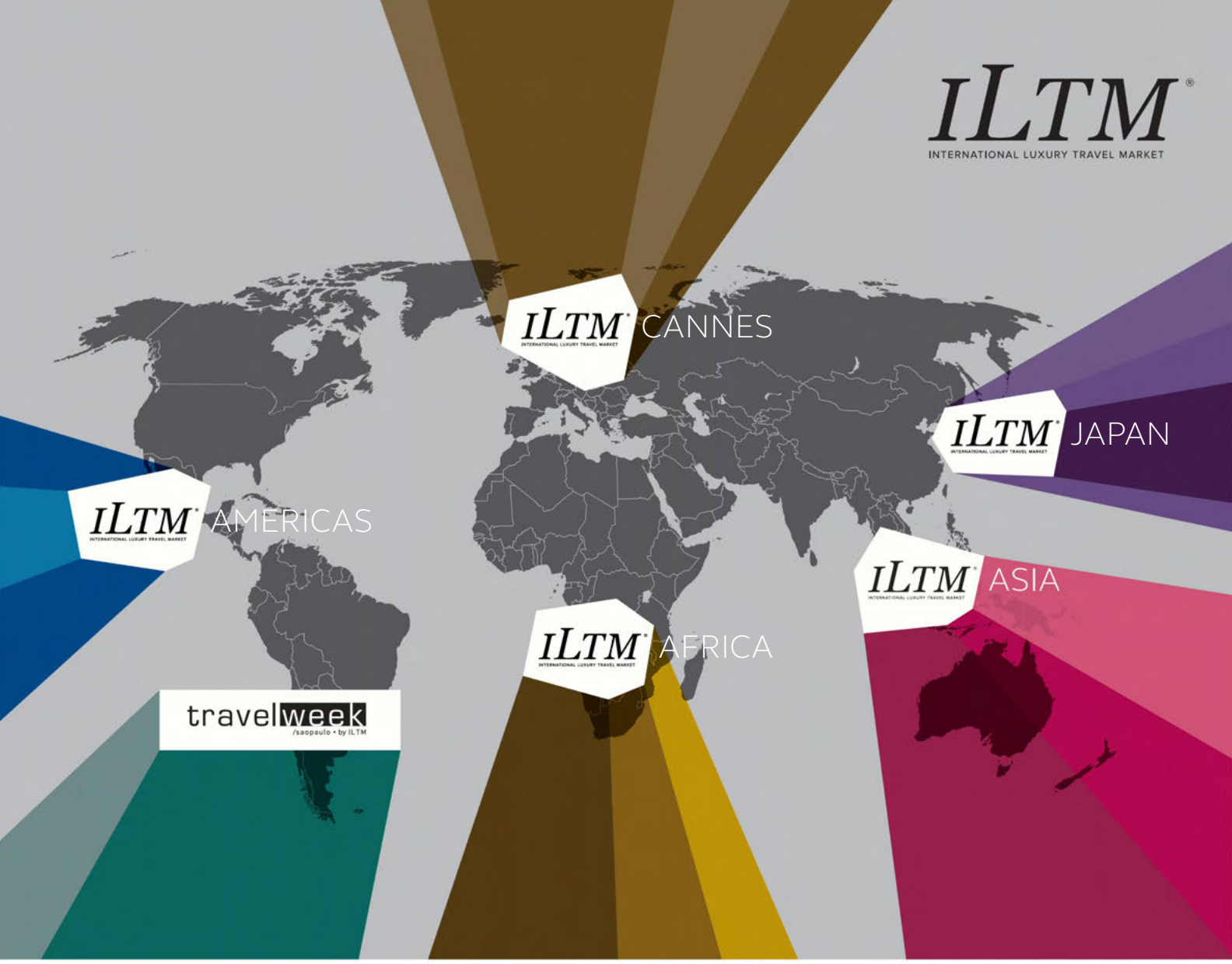
LODGING

Baobab Beach resort

Run by Italian expat Marina Ferraris, Baobab Beach Backpackers resort offers bungalows, rustic huts, a restaurant, and camping facilities.

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REPORTED BY DOUGLAS ROGERS



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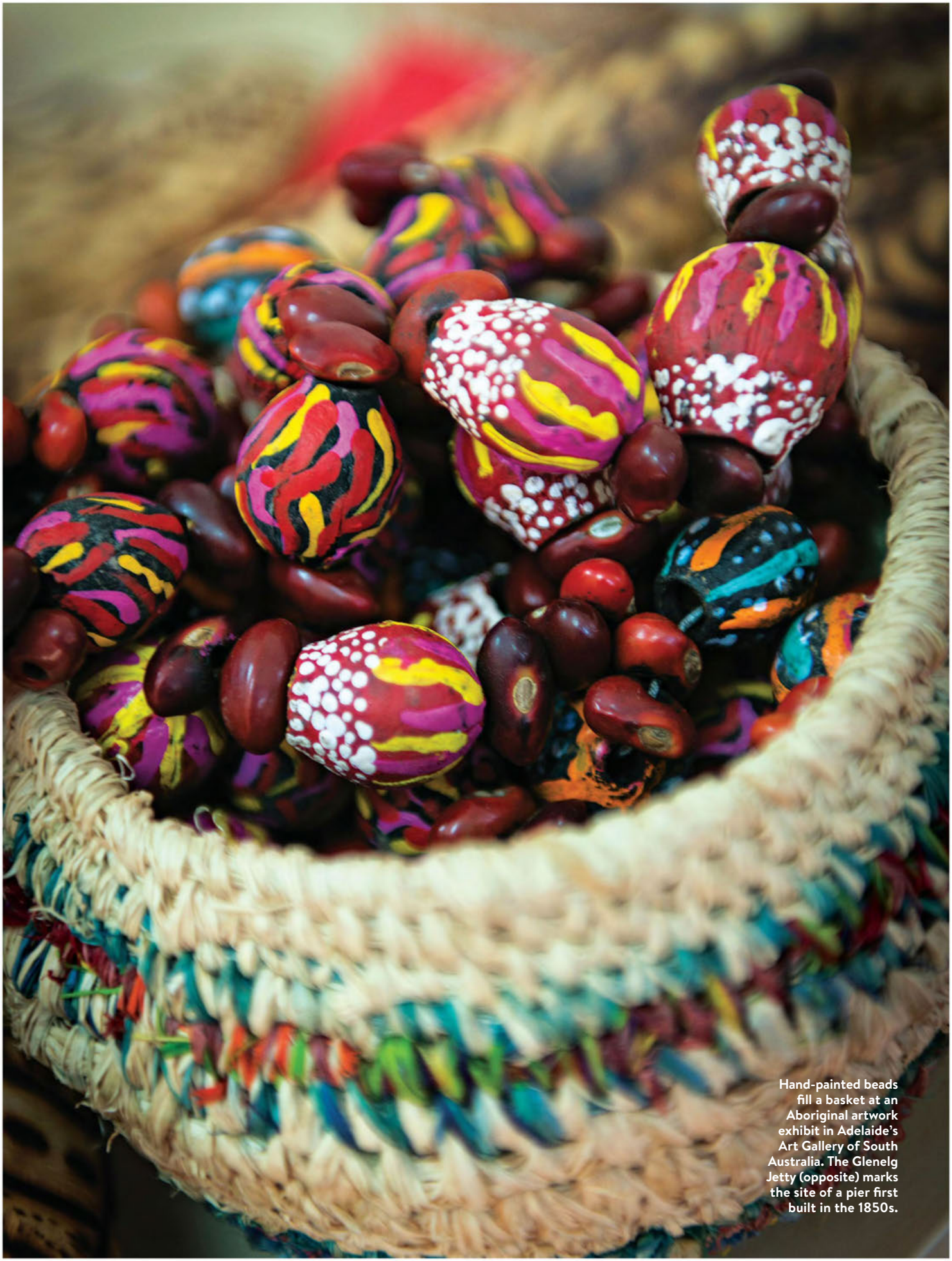
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THE SUN-KISSED CAPITAL OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA QUIETLY HAS REINVENTED ITSELF AS A COSMOPOLITAN CROSSROADS THAT PUNCHES WAY ABOVE ITS WEIGHT.



Hand-painted beads fill a basket at an Aboriginal artwork exhibit in Adelaide's Art Gallery of South Australia. The Glenelg Jetty (opposite) marks the site of a pier first built in the 1850s.

"SASSY," "EXCITING"—you won't hear either of those words used to describe Adelaide, at least not by anyone who lives here, in the capital of the state of South Australia. Its 1.3 million residents have always considered their home a wallflower compared with its eastern neighbors, scenic Sydney and urbane Melbourne. One word you will hear, however, is "lifestyle." Adelaide is a relaxed place, with a Mediterranean-like climate, miles of beaches, and wine-producing hills; you can go from sea to vineyards in under 50 minutes. People here aren't slaves to work schedules, traffic snarls, or parking frustrations.

The center is easy to explore, thanks to its grid of roads and ring of parklands. Start on North Terrace, a boulevard lined with Victorian-era residences and museums that offer a hit of culture, from the **Art Gallery of South Australia** (1900) to the **Southern Australian Museum** (1861) and the state **Library of South Australia** (1884), all free. Also here: the sublime **Adelaide Botanic Gardens** (1857), with its award-winning Bicentennial Conservatory—focused on at-risk or endangered tropical plants—and glass-walled Palm House.

You'll find a counterpoint to Adelaide's historical sites in the adjacent Riverbank Precinct, which is reinventing itself with a multimillion-dollar program. At its heart lies the updated **Adelaide Oval,** the city's hallowed cricket ground. A recent redevelopment transformed the site into a multipurpose stadium that now also hosts South Australia's other great sporting passion, Australian Rules Football. The effect of the renovation on the area has been instantaneous, energizing the adjacent **Central Business District** and kick-starting a bar and restaurant scene in hitherto ho-hum streetscapes.

Elsewhere, visitors can wander around lively **Central Market,** for decades the place to visit for breads, produce, cheeses, and other foodstuffs, then disappear into "eat streets" for laid-back meals at sidewalk cafés made for people-watching.

FOOD, GLORIOUS FOOD

In the 1970s, most of South Australia's abundant seafood and prime meats were being exported. But a crop of cooks from Asia and southern Europe embraced indigenous ingredients, launching a modern Australian "fusion" movement. For sheer around-the-world-in-80-plates variety, stroll lively Gouger and Rundle Streets. Along Gouger, Saturday morning is all about *yum cha*—Chinese tea and dim sum—in various Chinese eateries. Rundle Street is home to the excellent **Restaurant Orana,** which does contemporary "bush" foods, such as mud crab and kangaroo tartare. Nearby Leigh and Peel Streets have blossomed with cafés and wine bars. On Peel, try **Bread & Bone Wood Grill** for innovative burger combinations and exceptional soft-shell crab patties, and check out the great little bar in the basement. At **Rigoni's Bistro,** a Leigh Street institution, it's Italian food, from seafood risotto to mushroom gnocchi.

Head beyond the city center and you'll discover more fine wining and dining options. **Hill of Grace Restaurant,** in the Audi Stadium Club overlooking the cricket pitch in the Adelaide Oval, serves renowned Henschke wines, including its local Shiraz. At **Penfolds Magill Estate Restaurant,** next to the Magill Estate Vineyard on Adelaide's eastern outskirts, you can sample partridge, crab, and other specialties with a glass of peerless Penfolds Grange red—and city views to match.

Finally, two Adelaide musts: Central Market, for the Smelly Cheese Shop, Mushroom Man's Mushroom Shop, and Taldy-Kurgan (tip-top piroshki); and an order of fish-and-chips from just about anywhere, best eaten on Glenelg Beach as the sun sinks into Gulf St. Vincent.

FESTIVAL SPIRIT

Adelaide is home to a rich mix of arts, music, and sports events, especially in the summer weeks from mid-February into March. Many fall under the umbrella of the **Adelaide Festival** (to be held February 26-March 14, 2016), the largest annual arts showcase in the Southern Hemisphere, which takes place around Victoria Square and other city "hubs." Main events include the **Adelaide Fringe** (February 12-March 14, 2016), which is second in size only to the original Edinburgh Fringe and an open invitation to all manner of theatrical lunacy; and the **Adelaide Writers' Week** (February 27-March 3), which draws top names from around the world to share words, wisdom, and wit in a parkland setting.

LOCAL TIPS



On Mount Lofty, check the gum trees for koalas; more up-close koala encounters can be had at **Cleland Wildlife Park.**

For an expansive panorama of Adelaide and Gulf St. Vincent, head up 2,385 feet to the summit of **Mount Lofty.**

Pick one of **Tourabout**'s city tours or guided walks, which include the "from grape to glass" tour of the Barossa Valley wine region.

To be properly local, you'll need to try bung fritz (a sausage), Balfours' frog cake (a sweet pastry not made with frogs), and a meat-and-peas pie floater (pie in thick pea soup).

OPENING PAGES: WAYNE FOGDEN/GETTY IMAGES (PIER), JOHN MONTESI (BEADS), SATC/ADAM BRUZZONE (KOALA), SATC/OZ (PERFORMER), JOHN LAURIE/BAUERSYNDICATION.COM.AU (RESTAURANT), TOURISM AUSTRALIA (SQUARE)





A bright-eyed performer (above, left) embodies the creativity on tap at the WOMADelaide arts festival. Culinary creativity rules at Orana Restaurant (above, right). The Glenelg town hall (below), a Victorian landmark on Moseley Square, now is home to the Bay Discovery Centre.





Popular for beers on tap and casual fare, the venerable Austral is both a pub and a budget hostelry.

Other crowd-pleasers include the world music and dance festival **WOMADelaide,** held in Botanic Park March 11-14, and **Clipsal 500,** an annual February car-racing event. Despite much grumbling at having city streets given over to howling V-8s cheered by 270,000 spectators, this extravaganza offers a counterpoint to all the highbrow Adelaide festival stuff.

PARTY PEOPLE

Alcohol is a cornerstone of Adelaide life, with many street corners boasting a pub. Try longtime area star **Austral,** on Rundle Street, for Cooper's Vintage on tap (paired with burgers), and the **Lion Hotel,** in leafy north Adelaide, for everything from locally crafted Hills hard cider to "classic fizz cocktails."

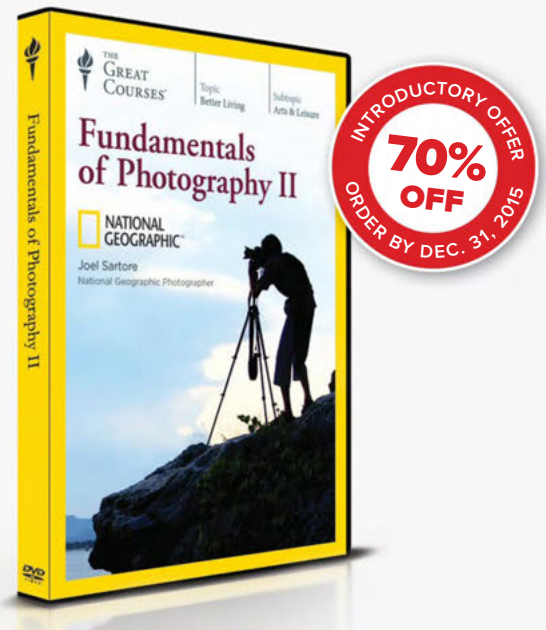
The big news in Adelaide, however, is the rise of the small bar. Following a change in liquor laws in 2013, Adelaide has seen dozens of inventive enterprises pop up. For a sampler, head to Peel and Leigh Streets, where you can imbibe into the wee hours at **Clever Little Tailor** (a "quality liquor bar," with clothing tags appended to the menus), Spanish-accented **Udaberri,** and **Casablabla,** a cocktail lounge that offers weekly Latin-dance tutorials. Also enjoying buzz: **The Apothecary 1878,** on nearby Hindley Street, which is fashioned from an old-time pharmacy.

Bars and pubs have always been integral to Adelaide's music scene; the band AC/DC has roots here. For emerging bands, pop by the much loved **Wheatsheaf Hotel,** in the suburb of Thebarton; **Edinburgh Castle Hotel,** on Currie Street; and the **Gov,** on Port Road. The 1970s never left **Four Doors Plus One,** on Hindley Street, a longtime pleasure strip serving up a mix of the good, the bad, and the ugly, especially on weekends.

Adelaide's location in one of Australia's traditional wine regions—the Barossa Valley lies just an hour's drive to the northeast—means many Adelaideans know their vintages. To see what the fuss is about, wander to the far end of Rundle Street, where you'll find the artsy bar/restaurant **Street ADL,** leather-upholstered **Botanic Bar,** wine bar **Mother Vine** (backed by senior players in the local wine industry), and the tasting room in the popular **East End Cellars** complex, which serves wine, cheeses, and sandwiches. Of course, you also can go straight to the source. The Adelaide Hills region is home to some 40 "cellar doors" (tasting rooms at vineyards), including **Lane Vineyard, Nepenthe, Shaw + Smith,** and **Hahndorf Hill Winery,** the last a knot of commendable vintners in the gentle hills behind the German-flavored village of Hahndorf.

This story is a collaboration with our U.K. edition, National Geographic Traveller.

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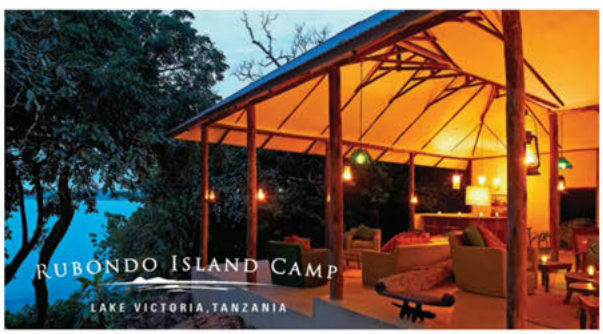
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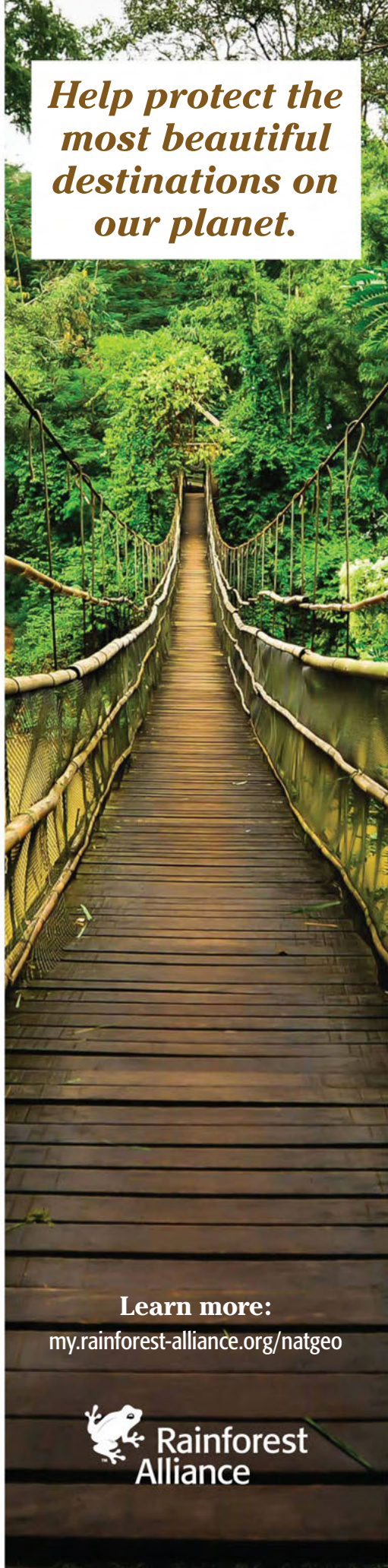
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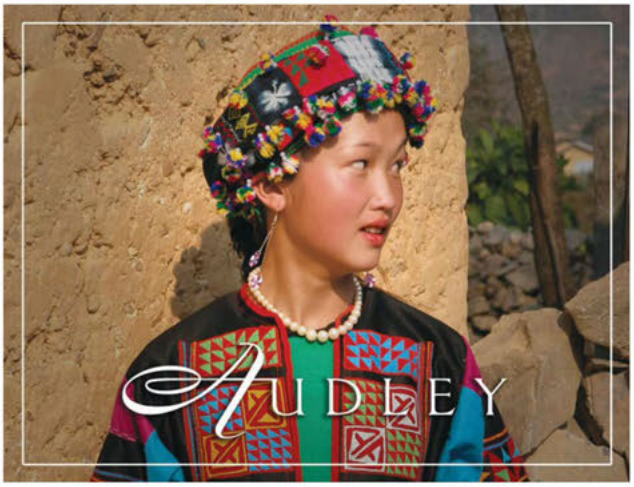
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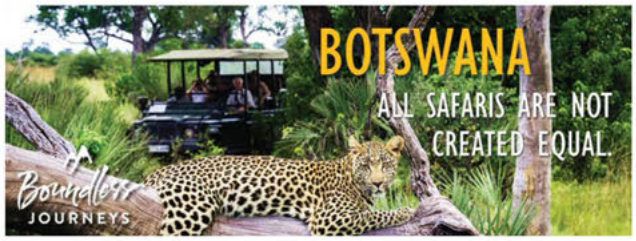
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I Heart Fez, Morocco

BY HAMZA EL FASIKI

A social entrepreneur, musician, and expert in Moroccan culture, Fez native Hamza El Fasiki shares a few of his favorite things about his centuries-old hometown.

The first place I take visitors is...

Fez's impressive medina and the Bab Boujloud, a massive gate built by the French in the early 1900s. The original 12th-century gate, or *bab,* which once served as an entryway to the medina, sits nearby.

My city is known for being...

The city of knowledge in Morocco, but it's really the city of handicraft.

The best time to visit my city is...

During the festival marking the anniversary of the death of Moulay Idriss II, a founder of Fez. The city beams with happiness, and many of the rituals can be witnessed in the streets and in homes.

My city's signature drink is...

Mint tea with orange blossom. Sample it at Souk el Henna, where you'll find henna, as the name suggests, but also blue Fassi pottery, copperware, tagines [pictured, top], and other souvenirs.

The best place to spend time outdoors is...

In the Jnan Sbil garden, a marvelous Andalusian public park filled with citrus and palm trees.

To escape the crowds...

I go to my father's shop, Craft Draft, in the merchant warehouse Fondouk Khrachfiyen. There, travelers meet artisans and learn about the art of engraving tea trays and the history of coppersmiths in Fez.

In the winter you should...

Grab a camera and capture the changing colors of the city's walls.

For a fun night out...

Attend a Sunday evening concert at Café Clock, a restored courtyard house turned cultural hub, which hosts traditional Gnawa musicians regularly.

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